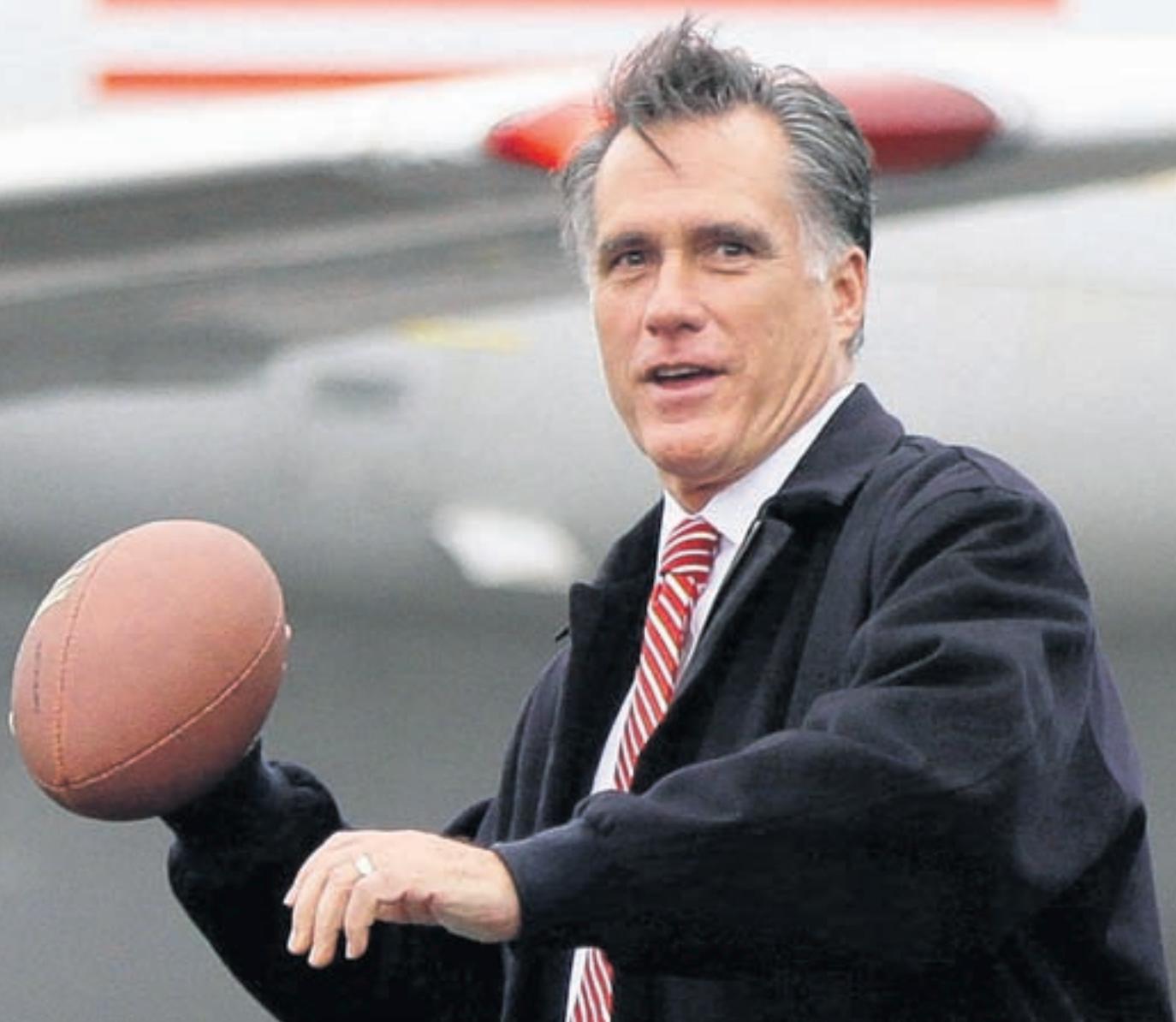


In The Pocket



Republican presidential candidate and former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney holds a football on the tarmac of Akron-Canton Regional Airport in Akron, Ohio, Friday, Oct. 26, 2012. Romney was met at the airport by his vice presidential running mate, Rep. Paul Ryan, R-Wis., and the football was handed to him by one of Ryan's children.

(AP Photo/Charles Dharapak)

Romney aims to shift focus back to weak economy

STEVEN R. HURST
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Presidential candidate Mitt Romney tried to keep voters focused on the U.S. economy Friday instead of a fellow Republican's comments that pregnancy

caused by rape "is something God intended."

With President Barack Obama spending the day at the White House after a two-day dash across eight battleground states that will determine the tight election, Romney gave what he

called a major speech on the economy, the top issue among voters with less than two weeks left before Nov. 6.

Romney, however, faced questions about the remarks of Indiana Senate candidate Richard Mour-

dock and new questions about his role in a key supporter's divorce.

Court documents released Thursday revealed that Romney created a special class of company stock for Staples founder Tom Stemberg's then-wife as a

"favor." Romney uses his equity capital firm Bain's involvement in the creation of the office supply company to show off his business skills.

Continued on next page

Romney aims to shift focus back to weak economy

Continued from front

Romney has tried to ignore both lines of attack, instead accusing Obama of playing partisan politics in an "incredibly shrinking campaign."

Opinion polls show Obama and Romney tied nationally. A new Associated Press-GfK poll of likely voters had Romney up 47 percent to 45 percent, a result within the poll's margin of sampling error.

The presidential contest has crossed the \$2 billion fundraising mark, putting the election on track to be the costliest in history. It's being fueled by a campaign finance system vastly altered by the new proliferation of independent political action committees

that are bankrolling TV ads in closely contested states. Romney delivered his speech on the economy in the battleground state

of Iowa. "Instead of more spending, more borrowing from China and higher taxes from Washington, we'll renew our faith in the pow-



Republican presidential candidate, former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney picks up a young child after he spoke about the economy at a campaign rally at Kinzler Construction Services in Ames, Iowa, Friday, Oct. 26, 2012.

(AP Photo/Charles Dharapak)

er of free people pursuing their dreams," he said. He argued that Obama has no proposals that can meet "the challenges of the times."

The government on Friday said U.S. economic growth improved to a slightly faster 2 percent rate in the third quarter, but Romney called that "discouraging" and said he could do better.

Tepid growth has given Romney an opening to challenge Obama's assessment that the economy is moving in the right direction. While Romney is seen by voters as better qualified to handle the economy recovery, recent polling shows Americans are increasingly positive about the direction of the country.

Obama returned to Washington late Thursday after a 40-hour, coast-to-coast tour of eight battleground states. On Friday, he will reach out to key constituencies in an MTV interview aimed at rallying the youth vote and an interview with American Urban Radio Networks, which has a largely black audience.

The U.S. presidential race is not decided by popular vote but on a state-by-state basis. The outcome depends on nine of the 50 U.S. states — Ohio, Florida, Virginia, North Carolina, New Hampshire, Iowa, Wisconsin, Nevada and Colorado — that do not reliably vote Democrat or Republican.

Obama on Thursday inten-

sified pressure on Romney to break ties with Mourdock over the candidate's remarks on abortion.

The comments offered the Obama campaign a new opportunity to highlight differences with Romney on an issue important to women. The president had long enjoyed an edge with that voting bloc, but a recent Associated Press-GfK poll found Romney had erased the president's 16-point advantage among female likely voters.

With the candidates virtually tied in national polling, a significant lead among women voters could tip the balance.

Romney, who appears in a television advertisement declaring his support for Mourdock, brushed aside questions from reporters Thursday. Romney opposes abortion but unlike Mourdock, supports exceptions in the case of rape.

Obama's campaign also turned to foreign policy on Friday, with a new ad showing images of Obama's trip to Israel and video of his pledge during his final debate with Romney that Iran will not get a nuclear weapon while he's president and that "our bond with Israel will be unbreakable."

The ad could have an impact particularly with Jewish voters in battleground state Florida.

Romney spokeswoman Amanda Henneberg responded that Obama's Middle East policy "has been a failure." □

Romney backer suggests race is behind Powell's endorsement of Obama

WASHINGTON (AP) — A top adviser to U.S. presidential candidate Mitt Romney backed away from his suggestion that fellow Republican and well-known general Colin Powell endorsed Barack Obama because both men are black.

Former New Hampshire governor John Sununu issued a statement late Thursday saying Powell is a friend and he respects the endorsement. He said he doesn't doubt that Powell's backing of Obama is based

on "anything but his support of the president's policies." Appearing on CNN earlier Thursday, Sununu said he wondered whether Powell had "a slightly different reason for preferring President Obama." Host Piers Morgan asked what reason that would be.

Sununu said, "Well, I think when you have somebody of your own race that you're proud of being president of the United States, I applaud Colin for standing with him." □

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Kelly Cox doesn't put much faith in either Barack Obama or Mitt Romney

WASHINGTON (AP) — Who are these people who still can't make up their minds? They're undecided voters like Kelly Cox, who spends his days repairing the big rigs that haul central California's walnuts, grapes, milk and more across America.

He doesn't put much faith in either Barack Obama or Mitt Romney. But he figures he's got plenty of time — a little more than a week — to settle on one of them before Nov. 6. And he definitely does plan to vote.

"I'll do some online research," said Cox, co-owner of a Delhi, Calif., truck repair shop. "I don't have time to watch presidential debates because it's a lot of garbage anyway. They're not asking the questions that the people want to hear."

About 5 percent of Americans with solid plans to vote have yet to pick their presidential candidate, according to a new AP-GfK poll. When you add in those who lean only tentatively toward their choice or won't declare a favorite, about 16 percent of likely voters look ripe for persuasion. That's about the same as a month ago. In a super-tight race, undecided voters have taken on almost mythic stature. Their questions at the town hall-style debate are parsed. Campaign techies wade through data to find them. The president dialed up 9,000 of them for an Air Force One conference call as he flew to Los Angeles this week.

But the undecided also endure Twitter sniping and late-night TV ribbing. They're derided as uninformed nincompoops who don't merit the power they wield. As David Letterman put it: "You're idiots! Make up your mind!"

Do these wafflers, ruminators and procrastinators deserve coddling — or scorn? Are they just misunderstood?

Two-thirds of persuadable voters have an established party preference, the AP-GfK poll shows. They're roughly divided between those who call themselves



Kelly Cox, co-owner of Shehan's Transport Refrigeration in one of his trucks, Thursday, Oct. 25, 2012, in Delhi, Calif. Who are these people who still can't make up their minds? They're undecided voters like Cox, who spends his days repairing the big rigs that haul central California's walnuts, grapes, milk and much more across America. He doesn't put much faith in Barack Obama or Mitt Romney.

(AP Photo/Gary Kazanjian)

Democrats or lean that way and those who are Republicans or lean to that side.

So why not just plan to vote with their party?

"They are really a little bit torn," said Lynn Vavreck, an associate professor of political science at the University of California, Los Angeles. "They may have some issue positions that are counter to their party, or they're not sure how they stand on some things."

Nancy Hoang, a University of Minnesota freshman studying mathematics, considers herself a fiscal conservative and leans Republican. Yet she vacillated because she agrees with the Democrats' support for gay marriage and opposition to voter ID laws. "I could have gone either way," said Hoang, 18. Not until after the final debate Monday did she decide: Her first-ever presidential vote will go to Romney.

Most of these undecided voters will come home to their favored party by Election Day, predicts Vavreck, who studies an ongoing survey of registered voters as well as trends from past elections.

About 30 percent of persuadable voters say they're political independents. That's three times the presence of independents — just 8 percent — among likely voters who have de-

cided who they'll vote for, according to the AP-GfK poll.

In an increasingly polarized America, they stand out. Robert Dohrenburg, a small business owner in McAllen, Texas, voted for Republicans Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush, but not for Bush's son, George W. He backed Obama in 2008, then had second thoughts this year.

Dohrenburg, 56, watched all three presidential debates before making up his mind to stick with Obama, in part because Romney "says one thing today and another thing tomorrow." He wishes Ron Paul had won the Republican nomination.

"I'm a very strong indepen-

dent," he said. "I choose the best candidate."

Persuadable voters are more likely to trust Romney to do a better job handling the economy and the federal budget deficit, the AP-GfK poll shows.

And they're about as comfortable with Romney as they are with Obama on foreign policy.

They are more likely to say Obama has a clear vision for the future, however. They tend to say he understands the problems of people like them better than Romney does. They're worried about the future.

Only 3 in 10 persuadable voters think the economy will improve in the coming year, compared with 6 in 10 decided voters. □

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Senate Leader Reid clear for release after car crash

LAS VEGAS (AP) — Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid has been cleared for release from the hospital after an apparent rear-end crash Friday afternoon on a Las Vegas freeway, his office said.

Reid suffered rib and hip contusions in the crash that happened about 1:10 p.m. Friday on Interstate 15, staffers said. He was taken to the hospital by his security detail as a precaution. Troopers had earlier reported he was transported by ambulance.

Reid, 72, was wearing a seatbelt at the time of impact, and walked into the hospital on his own.

Reid officials say other members of the senator's security detail and a staffer had minor injuries and were taken to the hospital for evaluation.

Six vehicles were involved in the apparent chain-reaction crash, including

two Las Vegas police vehicles and two Capitol Police vehicles that were escorting Reid. Images from the scene showed broken glass, bumper damage and deflated tires on some of the vehicles.

Two lanes were closed and four tow trucks were summoned to the freeway that runs parallel to the Las Vegas Strip, Nevada Highway Patrol spokesman Jeremie Elliott said. Officials in Reid's office said it wasn't imme-

dately clear where Reid was headed at the time of crash. Earlier, Reid took part in a ceremony honoring the National Atomic Testing Museum in Las Vegas as the newest "national" museum. The museum's exhibits focus

on the history of the development and testing of a nuclear bomb.

He was also due to speak to the editorial board of Spanish-language newspaper El Tiempo, according to editor Hernando Amaya.

Reid's wife, Landra, was speaking at a Las Vegas event featuring first lady Michelle Obama at roughly the time the crash happened, but she was not involved and made no mention of the incident during her remarks.

Reid, who has served as state legislator, lieutenant governor, congressman and five-term senator, has been majority leader since 2007. As the top Democrat in the Senate, he helped steer President Barack Obama's health care overhaul to passage in 2010 and secured his own re-election later that year, a surprise win in a Republican wave.□



This cell phone image from the scene shows damage to a vehicle in the motorcade that was transporting U.S. Sen. Harry Reid, D-Nev., on Interstate 15 near Sahara Avenue in Las Vegas on Friday, Oct. 26, 2012. Reid was cleared for release from the hospital after the apparent rear-end crash Friday afternoon on a Las Vegas freeway, his office said.

(AP Photo/Mike Blaskey)

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CASINO AND SHOPS

NYC cannibal case tests lines of fantasy, threat

TOM HAYS
Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — In Internet chats as breezy as they were bizarre, a New York City police officer accused of plotting to kidnap and eat as many as 100 women was once cautioned not to be wasteful when cooking a victim because "there is nearly 75 pounds of food there."

But no one was ever actually harmed in Gilberto Valle's alleged plot, let alone eaten. And a defense attorney says the officer was merely engaging in harmless Internet fantasy.

Where exactly the line is drawn between bizarre talk and a true plot has emerged as the key question in a case that has shocked even the most jaded New Yorkers.

Indeed, experts say many people have a compulsion to create horrific scenarios about cannibalism, and that the Internet allows them to indulge in their dark side anonymously and — usually — safely.

"There is a big difference between discussing, and even fantasizing about this

type of activity and actually carrying it out," said Jeffrey Parsons, a psychologist at Hunter College. "Not all the people who fantasize about it will go on to carry it out."

One website called "Devoured" — devoted to a fetish called "vore" — is almost comical in its approach, saying it's "where everyone's on the menu."

The site defines "vore" as a sexual interest that "occurs from the idea of being eaten whole and alive, eating another alive, or watching this process."

A chat room named "Yum Chat" spells out strict rules for participation: "In-character taunting between predator and prey that's all in good fun as part a role play is just fine, but player to player attacks" aren't allowed.

The online banter attributed to Valle is not characteristic of a sexual disorder, but more indicative of some type of psychotic behavior or a personality disorder, Parsons said.

"Certainly, there are people who are going to sort of address a disorder or problem

by letting it out, by venting," he said. "They think, 'If I can express, let it out in an

email, or a chat, that's satisfying enough, I don't have to go out and engage in

that behavior.'"

Police Commissioner Raymond Kelly declined to comment Friday on a criminal complaint filed in federal court in Manhattan that read like "Silence Of The Lambs" and earned Valle instant tabloid infamy. The Daily News dubbed him "Finest Young Cannibal." The New York Post blared "Cook 'em Danno." There also were reports of an odd disconnect between the horrendous allegations and Valle's softer side on social media.

In his profile on a dating site, he wrote that he considers himself "a true gentleman, and chivalry is huge with me. ... I'm on here simply because I haven't been able to find a girl who I want to spend some of my free time with." □



In this courtroom drawing Federal Defender Julie Gatto requests bail for her client, New York City Police Officer Gilberto Valle, right, at Manhattan Federal Court in New York. Valle was charged with leading a ghoulish double life by using a law enforcement database and fetish chat rooms to dream up a plot to torture women and then cook and eat their body parts.

(AP Photo/Elizabeth Williams)



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US: Pharmacy tied to outbreak knew of bacteria

MATTHEW PERRONE

AP Health Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Staffers at a pharmacy linked to the deadly meningitis outbreak documented dozens of cases of mold and bacteria growing in rooms that were supposed to be sterile, according to federal health inspectors.

In a preliminary report on conditions at the pharmacy, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration said Friday that even when the contamination at New England Compounding Center exceeded the company's own safety levels, there is no evidence that staffers investigated or corrected the problem. The FDA uncovered some four dozen reports of potential con-

tamination in company records, stretching back to January this year. The report comes from an

FDA inspection of the Framingham, Massachusetts-based company earlier this month after steroid injec-

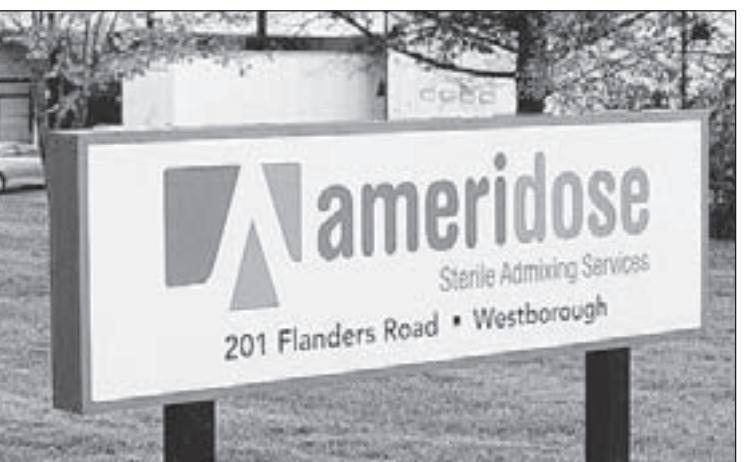


Photo shows Ameridose Sterile Adminixing Services, a pharmacy connected to the New England Compounding Center linked to a deadly meningitis outbreak. U.S. health inspectors say staffers at a pharmacy linked to the deadly meningitis outbreak over the past year documented dozens of cases of mold and bacteria growing in rooms that were supposed to be sterile.

(AP Photo/Marshall Wolff)

tions made by the company were tied to an outbreak of fungal meningitis. FDA officials confirmed last week that the black fungus found in the company's vials was the same fungus that has sickened 338 people across the U.S., causing 25 deaths. The New England Compounding Center's lawyer said Friday the pharmacy "will review this report and will continue our cooperation with the FDA."

Compounding pharmacies like NECC traditionally fill special orders placed by doctors for individual patients, turning out a small number of customized formulas each week. They have traditionally been overseen by state pharmacy boards, though the FDA

occasionally steps in when major problems arise. Some pharmacies have grown into much larger businesses in the last 20 years, supplying bulk orders of medicines to hospitals that need a steady supply of drugs on hand. The FDA report provides new details about NECC's conditions, which were first reported by state officials earlier this week. The drug at the center of the investigation is made without preservative, so it's very important that it be made under highly sterile conditions. Compounding pharmacies prepare their medications in clean rooms, which are supposed to be temperature-controlled and air-filtered to maintain sterility. □

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Trooper who fired on pickup truck was trying to disable it

CHRISTOPHER SHERMAN

JUAN CARLOS LLORCA

Associated Press

LA JOYA, Texas (AP) — A Texas state trooper who fired on a pickup truck during a deadly chase through the desert was trying to disable the vehicle and suspected it was being used to smuggle drugs, authorities said Friday.

The disclosure came a day after the incident left two people dead and two wounded on an isolated gravel road near the town of La Joya (HOY'-yah), just north of the Mexico border. The pickup truck was first encountered Thursday by state game wardens, who believed it was occupied by illegal immigrants. When the driver refused to stop, the game wardens radioed for help, and a state police helicopter with a sharpshooter was the first to re-

spond, according to Texas Parks and Wildlife Department spokesman Mike Cox. In a statement, the Texas Department of Public Safety said the truck appeared to be carrying a "typical covered drug load" on its bed and was travelling at reckless speeds.

After the shots were fired, the truck stopped. Seven Guatemalans were arrested, and no drugs were found. The nationalities of the dead and of an eighth person arrested later were not immediately released. The officer who fired the shots has been placed on administrative leave, which is standard procedure in fatal shootings.

In recent years, Texas state police have increased their presence in the border area, deploying more agents, more helicopters and more boats to patrol

the Rio Grande. Troopers are regularly involved in high-speed pursuits, often chasing drug smugglers into the river and back to Mexico.

Agency Director Stephen McCraw has said state police were pushed into that role because the federal government's efforts to secure the border have been insufficient. Diplomats quickly began their own investigation into the chase. Rita Claverie, Guatemala's deputy minister of foreign relations, said her government will demand an explanation from the U.S.

"This incident surprises us because we had never seen force being used from a helicopter. ... What had happened in the past were car pursuits and, in some cases, the shooting of undocumented persons," Claverie said. □

In New York, motive in children's killings remains mystery

JAMES BARRON

WENDY RUDERMAN

© 2012 New York Times

NEW YORK — A horrified mother walked into inside her Upper West Side apartment Thursday to see the family's nanny slashing her own wrists and neck with the same bloody kitchen knife she had already used on two of the woman's young children, who lay dead in a bathtub, Police Commissioner Raymond W. Kelly said Friday.

Kelly said the mother, Marina Krim, had left the two children — a 2-year-old boy and a 6-year-old girl — with the nanny, Yoselyn Ortega, 50, while Krim took her middle child, a 3-year-old girl, to a swimming lesson. He said that Ortega was supposed to meet Krim and the 3-year-old at a dance studio after the swimming lesson.

They never showed up, he said.

Krim, worried, walked home to the ornate prewar building where the family had lived for the past couple of years.

Kelly said detectives have been unable to question Ortega, who was in a medically induced coma in a hospital. He said Ortega lived with her son, her sister and a niece in Harlem and that her family had told the police that she may have visited a psychologist recently or had been considering doing so.

But what prompted the stabbings remained a mystery Friday as passersby added to a makeshift memorial outside the Krim's building on West 75th Street. Two small children who appeared to be about the same ages as the two Krim children laid stuffed animals — a turtle and a dog — beside the flowers and

candles that others had placed outside the building. Their mother watched. Another woman who stopped in front of the building was Rachel Cedar, 35. She said her first thought when she woke up Friday was that her two boys, ages 3 and 5, "are safe in bed."

"This poor mother is just like me," she said with tears in her eyes. "I have a babysitter who I adore and trust her implicitly. She's like a sister to me."

She shared more thoughts about having a nanny.

"It's the ultimate act of trust," Cedar said. "You have to rely on other people. It's hard to raise kids in New York."

She called what had happened in the apartment on the second floor "a betrayal."

Officials at Public School 87 — where the 6-year-old was a first-grader — sent an email to parents that called the stabbings "a terrible tragedy." The email said a crisis management team would be at the school, three blocks from the Krim's building, on Friday to "provide support to all children and adults" who needed it "during this terrible time." One nanny, dropping off an 8-year-old boy and a 5-year-old girl, said the school had canceled a field trip to a Broadway theater that had been scheduled for Friday.

And some parents said they were grappling with what to tell their children. William Davila, whose daughter Maya is a fifth-grader, said he hoped she did not know the dead girl. He said that in thinking about what the parents were going through, "I don't have words for

something like that."

It was a question that echoed through the neighborhood and across the city.

Sara Park, who with her husband runs a dry-cleaning shop right across from

Kevin Krim, Marina's husband, was a customer, she said, and Marina Krim sometimes came in with the children. She recalled the day Marina Krim brought the children in to have the boy's tiny suit altered for a

eration — to no avail, Park said.

The tragedy unfolded rapidly Thursday afternoon. Kelly had said after a briefing Thursday evening that when Krim returned around 5:30 p.m., she found a dark apartment. She went to the lobby and asked the doorman if he had seen the nanny and her children. Told that they had not left the building, she returned to the apartment. She looked around in the quiet rooms. Finally, she turned on the lights in the bathroom — and saw her two children in the bathtub and the nanny unconscious on the floor.

On Friday, Charlotte Friedman, who lives on the seventh floor, said she saw the nanny and the two children in the elevator at about 5 p.m. Thursday. Everything looked normal, she said: The girl was friendly, as she usually was, and the nanny said nothing.

"I never saw her as a warm nanny," Friedman said. Friedman said she asked the girl if she had gone on a play date. The girl said she had been dancing. □



A woman visits a makeshift memorial outside the apartment building where two children were reportedly slain by their nanny a day earlier, on the Upper West Side in New York, Oct. 26, 2012. The nanny fatally stabbed the two children, police said, and was found near them with a bloody knife, and remained in a hospital Friday with an apparently self-inflicted slash to her own throat.

(Kirsten Luce/The New York Times)

the Krim's building, shook her head in disbelief Friday and asked: "What kind of person would do that?"

"It was a perfect, beautiful family," she said.

wedding they were going to.

"He didn't want to stand still," she said.

Marina Krim gave him candy to try to induce coop-

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Syria's 'truce' marred by car bombs, sporadic fighting

KARIN LAUB

ZEINA KARAM

Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP)—Two deadly car bombs and sporadic fighting marred a shaky holiday truce Friday in Syria, although thousands of protesters used the brief respite in the civil war to pour into the streets and demand President Bashar Assad's ouster.

Chants of "Syria wants freedom!" rang out in the streets in the largest demonstrations in months, suggesting that a 19-month-old crackdown and sustained violence has not broken the spirit of those trying to rid the country of Assad's rule.

But even if a cease-fire holds for the intended four-day Muslim holiday of Eid al-Adha, it's unlikely to be a springboard for ending the conflict that has already claimed more than 35,000 lives.

Syria mediator Lakhdar Brahimi, the U.N.-Arab League envoy, has not charted a way forward or said how he would bridge the deep divide between Assad and his

opponents. The Syrian president won't resign and the opposition says it won't negotiate a transition deal until he does. Brahimi's plan marks the first attempt by the inter-

devastated entire neighborhoods. A more comprehensive U.N. cease-fire plan in April quickly collapsed.

Brahimi did not set clear terms for the truce, per-

monitoring compliance. A few hours after the truce took effect, a car bomb in a residential area of Damascus, near a housing complex for police, killed 10 people and wounded

area. Flames shot out of the car's gutted wreckage, as frantic residents tried to evacuate casualties. One rescuer carried a man with blood streaming down his face.

Another rigged car went off near an army checkpoint in the southern city of Deraa, killing three soldiers, said the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, which compiles reports from a network of activists.

Still, there appeared to be a drop in fighting and casualties Friday.

In recent weeks, the daily death toll usually topped 150. From dawn to dusk Friday, 62 people were killed, including 24 regime soldiers, according to the Observatory.

Khaled al-Shami, an activist in Damascus, said he expected the lull to end quickly. "The regime cannot afford to give a truce a chance," he said. "The leadership worries it will breathe new life into the revolution and they will not let that happen." □



In this photo released by the Syrian official news agency SANA, Syrian President Bashar Assad, center, prays at a mosque on the first day of Eid al-Adha, Friday, Oct. 26, 2012. Fighting raged near a military base in Syria's north as a cease-fire in the bloody civil war was supposed to go into effect Friday at dawn, activists said, illustrating the difficulty of enforcing even a limited truce coinciding with a Muslim holiday.

(AP Photo/SANA)

national community in six months to scale back the violence that has displaced hundreds of thousands of people and

haps to reduce the possibility of failure. He only said it should be in effect during the four-day holiday, but made no arrangements for

more than 30, Syrian state media said.

Amateur video posted online showed debris scattered across a large

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France:

Lawmakers pass bill to pay for abortions

PARIS (AP) — France's lower house voted Friday to fully reimburse all abortions and to make contraception free for minors.

National medical insurance currently pays in full for abortions for minors and the poor, while other women are reimbursed for up to 80 percent of the procedure's cost, which can be as much as €450 (\$580). Contraception is partially reimbursed.

The bill passed by the National Assembly would make all abortions free and would also pay for contraception for those between 15 and 18. It now goes to the Senate, where it is likely to pass.

"Women who want to stop an unwanted pregnancy have the right to be covered: The enactment of the right to choose to halt a pregnancy is an obligatory state service," the bill's language says.

Some groups complain that price is only one impediment to abortion access.

They say too few doctors offer the procedure and there needs to be more information about who does. Under the bill, reimbursements would not go beyond €450 — and some medical service providers in France charge more than that for an abortion.

While some segments of French society oppose the right to abortion, the issue rarely makes headlines. France is among the European countries that allow minors to have abortions without parental consent, and in 1988, was the first country to introduce RU-486, which terminates pregnancy by causing the embryo to detach from the uterine wall.

It is different from a drug known in the U.S. as the "morn-

ing-after pill," which works by preventing ovulation or fertilization.

In medical terms, pregnancy begins when a fertilized egg attaches itself to the wall of the uterus. □



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Canada:

1st black MP receives state funeral

CHARMAINE NORONHA

Associated Press

TORONTO (AP) — Hundreds of people paid their last respects to Canada's first black member of Parliament on Friday, rising to their feet as a jazzy rendition of Lincoln Alexander's favorite song — "How Great Thou Art" — rang out in an Ontario theater hall.

Alexander, a beloved national figure known to Canadians by his nickname "Linc," became a member of Parliament in 1968 and served as Ontario's lieutenant-governor from 1985 to 1991. He died last week at the age of 90.

Alexander's casket, draped in the Canadian flag with his medals atop, lay center stage at Hamilton Place for a state funeral in his hometown of Hamilton.

The inside cover of the funeral program had a photo of Alexander from his days in Parliament with a quote: "Just call me Linc."

"How many people in the world are known by every-



The casket of Lincoln Alexander is carried after his funeral service on Friday, Oct. 26, 2012 in Hamilton, Ontario. Alexander was Canada's first black member of Parliament, and Ontario's 24th lieutenant governor. He died last week at the age of 90.

(AP Photo/Nathan Denette)

body by one name?" said former Ontario premier David Peterson.

"Madonna, Prince, Cher and Linc. And how many people's names describe exactly what they do? That's what Linc did — he linked people to people, community to community and culture to culture — in a way that was unique to

him."

"There was something magical about that heart, that was totally unique to Linc," he said.

The crowd laughed when Peterson described his friend as a snappy dresser who made sure his shoes always shined on his size 14 feet and was a self-described ladies' man. □

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matinee: 12:00 2:00 SP PG

HERE COMES THE BOOM

daily: 4:15 6:45 9:00 PG

matinee: 1:30 11:30 PG

ALEX CROSS

daily: 5:00 2:45 PG-13

matinee: 12:00 2:45 PG-13

PARANORMAL ACTIVITY 4

daily: 7:30 9:45 SP R

late show: 12:00 SP R

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daily: 7:00 9:30 SP PG-13

late show: 11:45 SP PG-13

SECRET OF THE WINGS 2D

daily: 4:45 2:30 SP G

matinee: 12:30 2:30 SP G

FRANKENWEENIE 2D

matinee: 12:30 SP G

PITCH PERFECT

daily: 4:15 6:48 PG-13

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matinee: 12:15 2:15 SP G

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daily: 4:00 6:15 8:30

matinee: 2:00 4:00

late show: 11:15 NEW R

ARGO

daily: 5:15 7:00 SP R

late show: 11:45 SP R

TINKERBELL SECRET OF THE WINGS

daily: 4:45 2:15 SP G

matinee: 2:15 4:45 SP G

SINISTER

daily: 9:30 11:45 SP R

late show: 11:45 9:30 SP R

FRANKENWEENIE

daily: 2:30 4:45 SP PG

matinee: 2:30 4:45 SP PG

HERE COMES THE BOOM

daily: 5:00 7:30 9:45 PG

matinee: 2:15 4:45 PG

late show: 12:00 2:15 PG

ALEX CROSS

daily: 5:15 7:45 PG-13

matinee: 2:45 5:15 PG-13

PARANORMAL ACTIVITY 4

daily: 7:45 10:00 SP R

late show: 12:00 2:45 SP R

TAKEN 2

daily: 7:45 10:00 SP PG-13

late show: 12:00 2:45 SP PG-13

SECRET OF THE WINGS 2D

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Afghan suicide bomber kills dozens of worshippers

ALISSA J. RUBIN
SANGAR RAHIMI
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KABUL, Afghanistan — A suicide bomber struck in northern Afghanistan on Friday morning, killing at least 45 people, just as worshippers were emerging from a mosque to celebrate the first day of Eid al-Adha, the most important Muslim holiday, officials said. It was one of several attacks in Afghanistan on Friday, and by far the most lethal. The attack, in Maimana, the capital of Faryab province, also wounded 60 people. Among the dead were 25 members of the Afghan National Security Forces, including the Afghan National Civil Order Police commander for Faryab, the head of the police quick-reaction force and the chiefs of police for two districts of Maimana, according to Naqibullah Faqiq, a member of Parliament from Faryab. President Hamid Karzai immediately condemned the attack. "Those who are tak-

ing away the happiness of Muslims during the Eid al-Adha days are the enemies of Islam, and you cannot call them human or Muslim," he said in a statement. Dr. Maroof Samar, a surgeon at a government hos-

pital, said, "The hospital is overwhelmed by dead and wounded bodies; all off-duty doctors were called in." Samar ran to the hospital from the mosque, where he was among the worshippers, he said.

The province has become increasingly violent over the last year, and it now rivals Kunduz province for the distinction of being the most troubled province in northern Afghanistan, Western diplomats say. Unlike south-

ern Afghanistan, where the power struggles and attacks are among Pashtuns, the north has troubles tinged with ethnic bias. Ethnic Uzbeks make up a majority in Faryab, and there are smaller groups of ethnic Tajiks and Pashtuns.

A provincial reconstruction team run by Norwegians had been operating in Maimana, but the last of its members left in September, and most of the U.S. military personnel deployed in the province have closed their outposts, local officials said. Provincial officials who have been fighting the Taliban in Faryab were especially upset, because there had been hopes that recent battles with the insurgents had sapped their strength. However, it appeared that Friday's attack was in revenge for Taliban losses earlier in the week.

On Wednesday, Afghan security forces fought a battle with Taliban militants in the Pashtun Kot District, killing the shadow governor — the man who ran the Taliban government in the province — and 24 of his men, said Abdul Sattar Bariz, the deputy provincial governor.

Samar, the surgeon, said: "Everyone was thinking that after their shadow governor was killed, they would not be able to survive anymore in Faryab so this could be revenge for the shadow governor's death." A Taliban spokesman, Qari Yusuf Ahmadi, said he had not heard about the attack and requested details so that he could check with Taliban in the province. □



Bodies of victims of a suicide attack lie in a courtyard of a hospital in Maimana, Faryab province northwest of Kabul, Afghanistan, Friday, Oct. 26, 2012. A suicide bomber blew himself up outside a mosque in northern Afghanistan on Friday, killing dozens of people and wounding scores, government and hospital officials said.

(AP Photo/Talash Suroosh)

Pakistan girl recovering at 'encouraging speed'

ALAN COWELL
© 2012 New York Times

LONDON — The father of a Pakistani teenager shot in the head by the Taliban for her opposition to their hostility to education for girls said on Friday that she was "recovering at an encouraging speed" at the British hospital where she is being treated for her wounds.

"They wanted to kill her," Ziauddin Yousufzai, the father of the girl, Malala Yousufzai, said with emotion, news outlets reported.

"But she fell temporarily. She will rise

again. She will stand again."

Malala, 15, was shot while riding a school bus on Oct. 9 in the Swat Valley. She had become a symbol of resistance against the Taliban, advocating access to education for girls in an area that has been one of the Taliban's main strongholds in Pakistan. She was flown to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in the Midlands city of Birmingham on Oct. 15.

Malala's father and mother, Toorpekai Yousufzai, arrived in Birmingham on Thursday, accompanied by her two younger brothers, Atal Khan, 8,

and Khushal Khan, 12.

When the family was reunited on Thursday, for the first time since Malala was flown to Britain, "there were tears in our eyes out of happiness," her father told reporters. "We all cried a little bit."

He added: "It's a miracle for us. She was in a very bad condition."

A week ago, a bulletin from the Queen Elizabeth Hospital described her injury as "very grave."

"She's not out of the woods yet, but we are hopeful she will make a good recovery," the bulletin said. □

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Berlusconi convicted in fraud case

RACHEL DONADIO

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ROME – A court in Milan convicted former Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi of tax fraud Friday and sentenced him to four years in prison.

Berlusconi is also currently on trial over charges that he paid for sex with an underage prostitute. He has denied the accusation.

The ruling was Berlusconi's fourth lower-court conviction, and the first since he stepped down as prime minister in November, after years in which his personal legal battles often eclipsed the work of his government. His four-year sentence was reduced to one year under a law aimed at reducing prison overcrowding.

Besides being a blow to Berlusconi personally, the ruling comes as his center-right party is unraveling and Italy is in the throes of the most dramatic political transition since the early 1990s, when he first came to power.

It was just two days ago that he announced that he would not lead his party in Italy's next elections.

"It's without a doubt a political sentence, the way so many other trials invented against me have been political," Berlusconi said after Friday's ruling, calling in to a news program on a channel he owns.

A lawyer for Berlusconi said the former prime minister would appeal the ruling, which must go through two more rounds of appeal before becoming definitive. It is unlikely that he will ever serve jail time. □

BBC host denied sex abuse in 2006



Photo shows Sir Jimmy Savile, who for decades was a fixture on British television. A television station in Northern Ireland has unearthed video footage of an interview six years ago in which Savile denied that he participated in "underage sex."

(AP Photo/ Lewis Whyld)

ALAN COWELL

JOHN F. BURNS

© 2012 New York Times

LONDON – A television station in Northern Ireland has unearthed video footage of an interview six years ago in which Jimmy Savile, the former television host at the heart of a sex abuse scandal at the British Broadcasting Corp., denied that he participated in "underage sex."

The burgeoning scandal has swirled around Savile's behavior over decades, the inability of institutions – including the police – to prevent misconduct and, specifically, a decision by the editor of a BBC program to cancel an investigation into the affair last December at a time when other parts of the corporation, Britain's public broadcaster, were planning Christmastime tributes to Savile two months after his death.

As the disclosures have widened, so too have sus-

picions that the accusations against Savile were widely known within the entertainment world, the BBC and among some police units.

Some British newspapers focused their reports Friday on the number of occasions when police officers and prosecutors began investigations of Savile but did

not proceed. Those cases included four accusations of abuse dating from the 1970s that were investigated and abandoned in 2009. Prosecutors have now promised to review those cases.

In another case, disclosed by police on Thursday, a retired officer said he investigated an accusation that

Savile attacked a woman in his trailer in a parking lot at the main BBC television studios in west London in the 1980s.

Police said on Thursday they were looking for the file on the case.

Another case involved a woman in 2003 and a boy in 2008, British news reports said. □



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Spain's economic misery hits new threshold

RAPHAEL MINDER

© 2012 New York Times

MADRID — Although hardly a surprise, data released Friday showing that Spain's unemployment rate had breached 25 percent for the first time in the country's modern history were bad news for a government that had recently trumpeted a streamlining of its labor market rules.

As a signal of deepening recession, the bleak jobs data also raised the likelihood that Spain would once again miss budget targets agreed to with its eurozone counterparts. The one perversely positive element: The labor picture is so dark that it could help Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy make the case that Germany and other lenders cannot risk imposing further austerity measures on Spain's economy in return for providing more European rescue funding.

The dire jobs report "gives Rajoy more leverage in his European negotiations and is good ammunition to ask for more time to adapt,"

said Federico Steinberg, an economist at the Elcano Institute, a Madrid research organization.

Rajoy, however, is also fighting the crisis at home. Unions have called a general strike for Nov. 14, and

employed have swollen to 5.78 million people by the end of the third quarter, compared with 5.69 million people a quarter earlier and 2.6 million four years earlier, when Spain's property bubble burst.

was unsustainable. Twenty consecutive quarters of job destruction, he said, means that "people see very little light at the end of the tunnel, and Spaniards are losing hope."

The separatist push in Cat-

low external demand, continuing deleveraging by households, and restricted credit to companies."

On Friday, the International Monetary Fund and a team of European officials wrapped up a visit to Spain to assess its efforts to shore up its banking sector. The so-called troika of the IMF, the European Commission and the European Central Bank issued positive statements but urged the Rajoy government to maintain momentum on reform.

The assessment is part of the process that would enable Spain to receive up to 100 billion euros, or \$129 billion, of banking aid that eurozone finance ministers pledged to provide in June. Lengthy wrangling over how to disburse the money underlines the extent to which Spain is losing the sovereignty argument that Rajoy has long employed.

Instead, Rajoy was forced at the recent Brussels summit meeting of EU leaders to accept that conditions for Spain to receive European funding essentially need the approval of Germany, where Chancellor Angela Merkel is increasingly wary of trying to promote any additional eurozone bailout program ahead of next year's elections.

Spain's banking crisis came to the fore in early May, when Madrid nationalized one of the country's largest lenders, Bankia, and then requested the banking bailout a month later. On Friday, Bankia reported a loss of 2.6 billion euros for the third quarter.

One of the immediate challenges for Madrid is how to value assets that Bankia and other troubled banks are set to transfer to a so-called bad bank that is meant to sequester tens of billions of euros of property loans and repossessed assets that carry the risk of never being repaid or sold. In setting up that bad bank, Madrid is led into a difficult balancing act, one that proved Ireland's undoing earlier in the European debt crisis. □



A member of the Mortgage Victims' Platform (PAH) sleeps outside Bankia headquarters underneath banners reading: "rescue the people" during a protest against evictions in Madrid, Spain, Friday, Oct. 26, 2012. Spain's banks and government are struggling as the country suffers through its second recession in three years and its overall unemployment rate is at nearly 25 percent.

(AP Photo/Andres Kudacki)

elections in Catalonia on Nov. 25 could accelerate that region's drive toward independence.

According to Friday's data, the ranks of the un-

Luis Garicano, a professor at the London School of Economics, said the government's cost of paying unemployment benefits, now almost 4 percent of gross domestic product,

alonia "is partly a reaction to this lack of hope," Garicano said. "It worries me for what it says about what can happen in the next two years, in which we will have a sharp fiscal contraction,

LOCAL

Aruba TODAY

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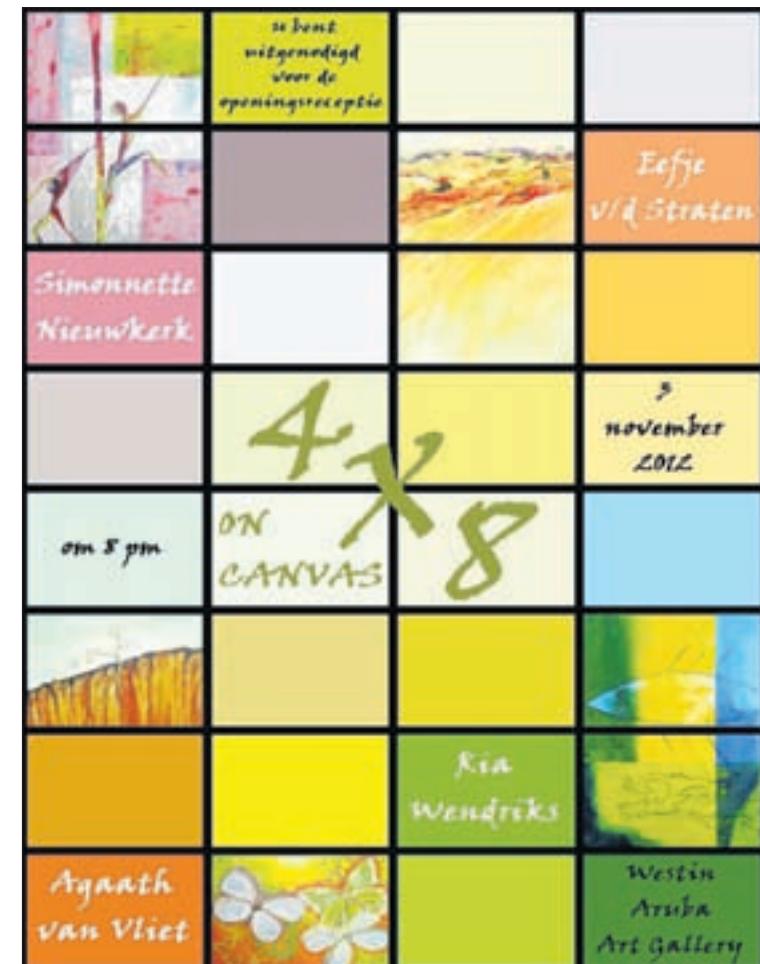
'4 x 8 On Canvas' Exhibition Opens Saturday, November 3!



'4 x 8 On Canvas' is an exhibition of four friends, Simonnette Nieuwkerk, Agaath van Vliet, Ria Wendriks and

Eefje van der Straten, who they launched the idea to come together once a work together on a similar week to paint.

A year and a half ago They looked for words in



Dutch that could be split in two, for example framework. Both 'frame' and 'work' can stand on their own, but put together the word became a challenge for the ladies. Each on her own played with the words they selected and painted their own creative inter-

pretation on canvas. This is how 4 x 8's different works came into being.

The exhibition is open daily for two months and is freely accessible.

Everybody is welcome for the opening on Saturday, November 3rd, in the Westin Aruba Art Gallery. □



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Hell in a Cell!! We will also show the MLB game on Saturday at 8:00pm and we have a special! With a purchase of \$50 or more you will get a Free Go Kart Gift Voucher! So now you can have fun watching the Wrestling event & the MLB play off Get Free Races at Bushiri Karting Speedway!

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Hard Rock Café Hosting Rocking Spook-taculous Halloween Weekend!



As a special treat this Halloween at Hard Rock Café, kids will receive a "Trick or Treat Bag" including a Party Bag filled with candies when you purchase any option of the Little Rockers (kids) menu. Kids can choose and enjoy one of the 8 kid's meals plus kid's beverage, for only \$10.00

a child. Our Rocking Halloween kid's special, starts on Friday, October 26th till Wednesday October 31st, while supplies are still in stock. We will also be rocking with our Little Rockers on Halloween weekend, Saturday, October 27th and Sunday, October 28th, from 12noon until late afternoon

in our Little Rockers Corner with fun kid's activities like Dino Jump, Face Painting, Figure Balloons and much more.

This Halloween kids can Eat, Play and Rock 'n Roll at Hard Rock Café. On Saturday October 27th, starting at 10PM Hard Rock Café is also celebrating Hal-

loween for adults with our main event "Hallo-Rock-A-Ween" where DJ Metropolis and The Idle Mist Band will take you back to the 70's and 80's.

Party people put on your costume but don't forget your dancing shoes, because the night fever will be at the Hard Rock Café. Entrance fee is \$10.00 per person. FREE bloody Jello Shots and Scary Bite Snacks before 12 midnight. Don't miss this Rocking Spook-taculous party!!!

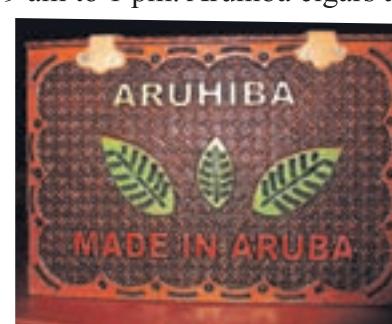


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ORANJESTAD- Benjamin Petrocchi, a true native Aruban started the newest export product of Aruba, locally produced hand rolled cigars called "Aruhiba". These cigars are produced and cultivated in Aruba. Petrocchi always had a interest in the cigar business and has also sold Premium Cuban Cigars, and now he is growing his own tobacco crops. After many attempts and trips to Santo Domingo and Cuba, he started his own production and cultivation of Aruhiba Cigars in Aruba. The whole process took him 10 years to perfect. Petrocchi dedication to the cigars is important for the moulding and process of making a perfect cigar which takes a long time. Their handmade cigar box is specially designed with their "Aruhiba" logo. Petrocchi considers Aruhiba as a promotion for Aruba through its fine cigars. The company sells Aruhiba to the international markets as well. Visit their retail store located in front of the Historic Dutch Windmill in front of the Westin Resort, with any purchase of \$20 and up you receive a free "Aruhiba" cigar or ask for their gift box of 5 cigars get 1 FREE for only \$37. They open from Monday to Saturday from 9 am till 6:30 pm and on Sundays from 9 am to 1 pm. Aruhiba cigars are now available at the gift stores in your resort



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Hollywood's famous smoked grouper is back!

PALM BEACH – Everyone loves traditional barbecue—ribs, chicken, sausage, pulled pork, and brisket, but unique to Aruba is Hollywood Smokehouse's smoked grouper. One of the restaurant's signature items in their original San Nicolas location, the new location in Bubali (next to The Old Dutch Bar and across from Texaco and Pizza Hut), has brought this popular Aruba original back to the menu.

"We re-introduced it a few weeks ago at the Battle of the Food Trucks, and it was a huge success, helping us to win for "Most Unique & Original," so we decided it was time to put it back on the menu permanently," says owner Michael Bislick. Hollywood Smokehouse is open weekends (Saturday and Sunday from noon to 8pm) and serves in a casual take-away service, but folks are welcome to go next door and enjoy their meal at The Old Dutch Bar with local drink prices.□



American Style Burgers Rule!!

The inspiration for a good American style hamburger comes right from the owners backyard grill. Aaron Walisever – before his 'retirement' – was known as "The King of Fireplaces & Grills" in New England. Moving to Aruba from Sharon, Massachusetts with his wife Rosie was a positive move all around – but their search for a good burger and fries didn't stretch far from home. It was this reason that Rosie & Aaron opened 5 Burgers Aruba! As the name implies, there are 5 specialty burgers offered including a mammoth Western Burger, a tasty melted Gouda Burger, a Farmers Burger complete with a fried egg. For the very hungry, a 3 patty Man Burger and to round out the specials – a zesty chicken breast with special sauce is also available.

Of course, hamburgers and cheeseburgers – small and regular sized are also on the menu. But the big surprise is the hand-cut daily – french fries - from select Idaho potatoes and hand-made onion rings! Cooking these in peanut oil leaves the pure potato flavor in the fry. A favorite way to enjoy fries is with vinegar! These complement any meal ordered at 5 Burgers! Burgers are pressed daily and are U.S.D.A.

choice beef only and lightly seasoned with a special spice blend. They can even satisfy you if you desire a veggie burger. Toppings are encouraged and available at no additional charge – raw or grilled onions & mushrooms, lettuce, tomato, BBQ sauce and many more tasty items. Brand new items to the menu include a hand-made beef empanada and chicken bites. 5 Burgers Aruba is open from Noon to 10-ish daily. Delivery is available to your pool or hotel room! They are located behind Senor Frogs and across from the Radisson Hotel. Come by and enjoy a great burger experience. Rosie & Aaron are often on site – making sure that you are happy with your burger experience! Call 5 BURGERS ARUBA at 586-3904.□



SPORTS**Aruba TODAY**

Charlotte Bobcats' Michael Kidd-Gilchrist guards Miami Heat's LeBron James (6) during the second half of an NBA preseason basketball game in Raleigh, N.C., Tuesday, Oct. 23, 2012. Miami won 98-92.

Associated Press

LeBron's goal: Still to be the game's best

TIM REYNOLDS
AP Sports Writer

MIAMI (AP) — LeBron James won a championship and nothing changed. Sure, there were a few events. The obligatory champagne shower at his stall in the Miami Heat locker room. The parade through before an estimated 400,000 fans. A pep rally at his high school. And Tuesday night brings the ultimate capper, the ring-and-banner ceremony just minutes before the start of a new season. Then it begins again, another year, another quest for a title.

Having one title is not completely satisfying for James, who put the he-can't-win notion to rest when the Heat beat the Oklahoma City Thunder in five games for last season's NBA crown. It was a perfect run for the perennial All-Star: Besides getting engaged and winning his second Olympic gold, James walked away with the NBA's three most coveted trophies: MVP, Finals MVP and the championship.

Continued on Page 22

THE BIG CHILL



Tigers hope bats warm up in Comerica Park

Detroit Tigers' Miguel Cabrera (24) holds up his bat after striking out in the eighth inning against the San Francisco Giants during Game 1 of baseball's World Series, Wednesday, Oct. 24, 2012, in San Francisco.

Associated Press
Page 21

Martin, Buccaneers race past Vikings, 36-17



Tampa Bay Buccaneers running back Doug Martin, left, runs over Minnesota Vikings free safety Harrison Smith during the second half of an NFL football game Thursday, Oct. 25, 2012, in Minneapolis.

Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — The Tampa Bay Buccaneers romped to a 36-17 victory Thursday to hand the Min-

nesota Vikings their first home loss this season as rookie Doug Martin racked up 214 total yards and two

touchdowns. Martin took a pass and 64 yards for a score, one of three Josh Freeman's three

touchdown passes, to give Tampa Bay a 27-10 lead 1:21 into the second half. Martin then capped a drive of more than 9 minutes with a 1-yard muscle into the end zone midway through the fourth quarter to crush the comeback opportunity for Minnesota.

Adrian Peterson had a season-long 64-yard run for a score that brought the Vikings to 30-17, but his lost fumble in Minnesota territory in the second quarter led directly to a touchdown by the Buccaneers (3-4).

The Bucs, who became just the second visiting team to win on a Thursday night in seven games this season, revived their struggling pass rush with three sacks and flustered Christian Ponder with a heavy dose of blitzes. Ponder finished 19

for 35 for 251 yards, one touchdown and a late interception at the end of a desperation drive.

With a 13-point lead, just trying to keep that clock running as quickly as possible, the Bucs could've gone conservative, but they refused to settle for a punt. Starting at their own 13 with 1:12 left in the third quarter, they plowed their way up the field — Freeman completed four third-and-long passes — and finished off the game with Martin's third-and-goal touchdown run with 7:03 remaining.

Freeman went 19 for 36 for 262 yards and, most importantly, no turnovers. Mike Williams had one of the touchdowns and 68 yards on six receptions, and the Bucs held the ball for nearly 38 of the 60 minutes. □

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UNICASA SUPERMARKET**NFL Preview****Points parade:
Saints at Broncos****BARRY WILNER****AP Pro Football Writer**

The welcoming committee for Joe Vitt as he returns from his six-game suspension to be the New Orleans Saints' interim coach consists of Peyton Manning and the revitalized Denver Broncos. Maybe Vitt wants to stay away another week. New Orleans chose Vitt to stand in for Sean Payton while the head coach is banned for the 2012 season for his role in the team's bounties program. Aaron Kromer then was the interim-interim coach and the Saints lost their first four before rebounding with two victories.

"Real tough," Vitt said of sitting out the first six games. "I mean, listen, this is all I've ever done for 44 years between high school and prep school and five years of college and 34 years in the league; it wasn't a very easy transition. It was tough sitting back and watching our team play Sunday and it was tough not being around the guys, it was tough not seeing Sean.

"And I'm happy to be back now." Having Vitt back might add some continuity for New Orleans. Facing Manning and Denver might add some headaches.

"With Peyton, the thing that's unbelievable is what he's been through physically and what he's had to endure physically and now he's coming back and he's putting up historic numbers," Vitt said. "I mean, in the last three games, he's averaged 300 yards, three touchdowns and a 70 percent completion

percentage. The way he's playing in the second half, the way they're outscoring their opponents in the fourth quarter is historic."

If not historic, certainly impressive. Denver has gone through a gauntlet in the early season and survived with a 3-3 record. The defeats are to three of the league's premier teams: Atlanta, Houston and New England, two on the road.

Now is the time for the Broncos to take charge in the AFC West, but they need plenty of points against the Saints. Manning would love to oblige against his hometown team.

"It's a game against a really good team, a team that's hot, a team that their record and statistics and all those are very misleading," Manning said. "It's a big-time football team that knows how to win."

After Tampa Bay blew out Minnesota 36-17 on Thursday, with rookie Doug Martin racked up 214 total yards and two touchdowns, the round resumes in London with the St. Louis Rams hosting the New England Patriots in Wembley.

The Rams have played well at home, so shifting this game 4,000 miles (6,400 kilometers) away isn't a particularly good idea. But at least they went over to England early; the Patriots decided not to depart until week's end.

New England coach Bill Belichick won't let his players think about anything but business.

"The time change, the



Denver Broncos quarterback Peyton Manning pumps his fist as he leaves the field following their 35-24 win over the San Diego Chargers in an NFL football game, Monday, Oct. 15, 2012, in San Diego.

Associated Press

travel — that's certainly different than most normal games," Belichick said, "but it's not anything we haven't dealt with before. We've traveled to the West Coast. We're just going the other

direction."

Also on Sunday, it's Atlanta at Philadelphia; Carolina at Chicago; the New York Giants at Dallas; Washington at Pittsburgh; Jacksonville at Green Bay; Seattle at

Detroit; Indianapolis at Tennessee; Miami at the New York Jets; San Diego at Cleveland; and Oakland at Kansas City.

San Francisco is at Arizona on Monday. □

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Azarenka seals No. 1 ranking at WTA Championships

NESHA STARCEVIC

AP Sports Writer

ISTANBUL (AP) — Victoria Azarenka of Belarus made sure of finishing the year as the top-ranked player in the world by beating Li Na of China 7-6 (4), 6-3 at the WTA Championships on Friday.

Azarenka secured a spot in the semifinals and will next play Maria Sharapova.

"It's kind of difficult to believe that a little girl from Belarus is on that list," Azarenka said. "It's really incredible achievement. When I started to play tennis I had this big picture in my head that I want to be there. Back then it's so far away. It's like pretty much touching the sky."

"I'm here sitting kind of in the sky, so it's really incredible feeling."

Agnieszka Radwanska of Poland advanced to the semifinals when she edged Sara Errani of Italy 6-7 (6),

7-5, 6-4 in a match that lasted nearly 3 1/2 hours. The fourth-ranked Radwanska will now play Serena Williams on Saturday.

Sharapova swept past Sam Stosur 6-0, 6-3 on the final day of round-robin play but Azarenka's win means that the Russian will not be able to wrest the No. 1 ranking from her.

Azarenka won the Australian Open in January and had been ranked No. 1 for most of the year, except for a brief period after Sharapova had won the French Open.

Sharapova had already qualified for the semifinals of the elite, eight-woman event and has won all three of her round-robin matches.

The Russian rolled through the first set, allowing Stosur only five points. Stosur was an alternate who replaced defending champion Petra Kvitova, who withdrew be-



Victoria Azarenka of Belarus returns a shot to Li Na of China during their match on the fourth day of the WTA Tennis Championships in Istanbul, Turkey, Friday, Oct. 26, 2012.

Associated Press

cause of illness.

"I certainly didn't want to play as long a match as I did in the previous round. I wanted to do a better job of a few things and I think I did," said the second-ranked Russian.

Stosur put up more of a

fight in the second set, but Sharapova ended it with a smash.

Errani finished the tournament with one win and two defeats. The seventh-seeded Italian won a game in the middle set that went to nearly 15 minutes but was

not able to use that momentum and dropped her serve to fall behind 6-5. Radwanska served out the set and opened up a decisive 3-0 lead in the final set to secure a place in the semifinals.

"I had to play my best tennis until the end of the match because every game was a big fight," Radwanska said.

Williams was undefeated in three matches in her Red Group and didn't play on Friday.

The match between Radwanska and Errani lasted 3 hours, 29 minutes and was the longest recorded best-of-three-set match in WTA Championships history. The previous record was 3:24, set in the 2007 final when Justine Henin defeated Sharapova 5-7, 7-5, 6-3. The event, however, also used a best-of-five format for a while and had longer matches. □

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Tigers hope bats warm up in World Series chill

By BEN WALKER
AP Baseball Writer
Associated Press

DETROIT (AP) - Toting his tiny aluminum bat, 5-year-old Gage Brookens wandered toward the cage and watched Austin Jackson, Omar Infante and a few other Tigers take batting practice on a chilly afternoon at Comerica Park. Maybe that's what these slumping Detroit hitters need in this World Series. Metal bats, rather than their weak wood.

"Oh, I don't know if they'd allow that," kidded Gage's grandpop, Tigers first base coach Tom Brookens. "But the hitters definitely wouldn't mind."

Something better change for Triple Crown winner Miguel Cabrera, Prince Fielder and the Tigers real soon or their year is going to end real shortly. They totaled only three runs and 10 hits in San Francisco while falling into a 2-0 deficit against the Giants.

Game 3 is Saturday night, with Anibal Sanchez starting for Detroit against Ryan Vogelsong.

The Tigers are hoping that a switch in scenery - the ivy hanging on the center-field backdrop at Comerica has turned to autumn colors since the AL championship series - and a flip in pitchers might help.

Throttled by left-handed starters Barry Zito and Madison Bumgarner at AT&T Park, the Tigers are eager to see a right-hander. Any right-hander, in fact: Detroit batted .275 against righties, .253 vs. lefties.

"Sometimes you can't explain it," Tigers catcher Alex Avila said before a



Detroit Tigers' Prince Fielder smiles during introductions before Game 1 of baseball's World Series against the San Francisco Giants Wednesday, Oct. 24, 2012, in San Francisco.

Associated Press

workout Friday.

"In our case, we've had trouble all year with left-handed pitching, which is strange because we have a lot of good hitters on the team."

"It'll be a nice change, obviously, to face a right-hander because we've had more success."

The Tigers will see Vogelsong, followed by fellow right-hander Matt Cain in Game 4.

"We've gone through spurts this whole season where we've thrown the ball like this as a staff," Vogelsong said. "We obviously had our downtime there in the middle of September and at the end of August."

"And we're just all kind of hitting our stride here at the same time."

It's up to me and Matt now to keep it going over here in Detroit."

Tigers manager Jim Leyland plans to insert speedy

rookie Quintin Berry and Andy Dirks in his outfield. A few big hits would certainly energize the Tigers. So might a few breaks, they believe.

"The ball just hasn't rolled our way yet," Berry said. "They got a hit off the third-base bag."

They had a bunt that wouldn't go foul. They made great catches in left field.

"But no excuses. We're back at home, this is our chance."

No mistaking that the Series has shifted from California to Michigan.

In San Francisco, it was downright balmy in the 60s, and made for a pair of picture-perfect settings to play ball.

At Comerica, it was in the mid-40s and the lights were turned on while the Tigers worked out.

The forecast was for Game 3 was for temperatures to drop into the upper 30s in the later innings.

"We have got heaters in the dugout for both teams, obviously. Ours is going to be a little warmer than theirs, I think, tomorrow night," Leyland said. "But that's all right. We're not

going to tell them that. I'm just kidding."

"You know what? It's cold, but I mean this is the World Series. It's cold for everybody. It's cold for the fans, the beer is cold, everything is cold. It's great."

Enjoy it."

While the Tigers have lost five straight World Series games dating to 2006 against St. Louis, they've also won five postseason home games in a row. Detroit began that string last year in the ALCS, took two against Oakland this year in the division series and then finished off an ALCS sweep of the Yankees.

Overall, the Tigers have taken eight straight at home.

"I think a lot of teams, your really good teams, they dominate at home. That's what they do - the Cardinals, the Reds, they were really tough at home," Giants manager Bruce Bochy said.

"We ended up having a pretty good home record, despite having some struggles there in September or late August.

But it's a team that feeds on probably their home crowd, and they're more comfortable at home, and that's usually the case in baseball."

But this certainly is a club that we know is playing very well here." □



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LeBron's**Continued from Page 17**

For an encore, he wants more.

"I want to be the best of all-time," James said in an interview with The Associated Press. "It's that simple." He expressed similar sentiment last year, and the year before that, and probably all the way back to high school in Akron, Ohio. He always wondered if a championship would change that perspective. He now has his answer.

"Not really, honestly," James said. "I haven't had much time to really just think about what actually happened. At the end of the day, there's still going to be people that say, well, he's not going to be able to win two. He's not going to be able to do it again."

Time will tell.

At 6-foot-8, 260 pounds and blessed with a speed-and-strength combination — "he's a freak," Detroit coach Lawrence Frank said — James is widely considered the best player in the game today. He has won three MVP awards and some opposing coaches say he might keep winning those until voters get tired



Miami Heat forward LeBron James (6) passes off the ball as Washington Wizards center Emeka Okafor (50) defends during the first half of an NBA preseason basketball game, Wednesday, Oct. 24, 2012, in Kansas City, Mo.

Associated Press

of selecting him.

But the best of all time, that title will obviously take some work.

So this summer — partly because of the desire to win another ring, partly because of his incessant

need to silence doubters, partly because it's just who he is — James took very little time off. He went straight from the finals to the Olympics, then rested briefly before getting back in the gym. James arrived

at camp in essentially the same shape as he ended last season.

"He has great perspective on this game and what it takes to be a champion," Heat coach Erik Spoelstra said. "He's one of the most self-motivated players I've ever been around. But yes, he also needs to be stimulated from time to time. It's a joy for our franchise to have this opportunity to be able to work with him."

Last season was a joy for James as well, and not just because of the title.

After the hating-the-Heat phenomenon that followed his decision to leave Cleveland for Miami in 2010 — and the manner in which he made that decision — James said last season was about getting back to the basics of basketball. He surrounded himself with friends and family whenever he could. He tried to ignore at least some of the round-the-clock coverage of all things LeBron. He was going to be happy again, no matter what.

It worked. The two knocks about James a year ago were that he couldn't close games, that he couldn't rise to the ultimate moments and that he couldn't

win a title. He debunked all of that — the 45-point game in win-or-else Game 6 at Boston in the Eastern Conference finals, the one-legged 3-pointer when he was cramping against Oklahoma City that helped the Heat win Game 4 of the finals, and then, the triple-double in the season's last game. James went to the bench with 3:01 left in that game, and within moments, started dancing and jumping around, waving his arms and grinning. Happy, personified.

"The best thing about last year is we got all the way to the mountaintop and then we crossed over," James said. "So now I know what it takes to get there and actually get over the top of that mountain."

James is on the verge of entering even more rarefied NBA air. He enters the season 47th all-time in scoring, with a chance to move up to around No. 30 if he posts average-for-him numbers over the next 82 games. Among active players, he's ninth in scoring, and each of the eight names above him on that list have completed at least 14 NBA seasons. James has completed nine. □

NHL cancels games through the end of November



In this May 15, 2012, file photo, ice covered hockey pucks are shown at the New Jersey Devils practice rink in Newark, N.J.

Associated Press

IRA PODELL

AP Sports Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — The NHL lockout has forced the cancellation of all games through the end of November. One day after a league-imposed deadline passed for a deal with the players' association that would allow for a full season, the NHL announced

Friday that 326 regular-season games were lost. That comes out to 26.5 percent of the schedule, from Oct. 11 through Nov. 30.

"The National Hockey League deeply regrets having to take this action," deputy commissioner Bill Daly said in a statement.

"By presenting a proposal to the NHLPA that contemplated a fair division of revenues and was responsive to player concerns regarding the value of their contracts, we had hoped to be able to forge a long-term collective bargaining agreement that would have preserved an 82-game regular season for our fans. Unfortunately, that did not occur.

"We acknowledge and accept that there is joint responsibility in collective bargaining and, though we are profoundly disappointed that a new agreement

has not been attained to this point." The dispute, primarily over money, is somewhat similar to the 2004-05 lockout that led to the cancellation of that entire season — the first time a North American professional sports league lost a complete campaign to a labor dispute. Reaching a new deal became even tougher on Friday because the NHL pulled its most recent offer to the players — one that included a 50-50 split of hockey-related revenues — off the table, Daly told The Associated Press. The NHL proposal was contingent on the league playing a full 82-game season, beginning on Nov. 2, which now won't happen.

"The league officially informed us today that they have withdrawn their latest proposal and have cancelled another slate of regular-season games,"

union executive director Donald Fehr said in a statement. "This is deeply disappointing for all hockey fans and everyone who makes their living from hockey, including the players. But it comes as no surprise."

Whether any of the canceled games can be rescheduled in the event of a quick settlement remains to be seen. "We obviously want to reach an agreement as soon as possible and when we do, we will try to put together a schedule that will maximize the number of regular season games we can play, subject to reasonable logistical and scheduling parameters we will have to discuss with the players," Daly told the AP in an email. "Having said that, once clubs begin releasing dates and rebooking their buildings, as they will be free to do for the month of November,

the process will obviously get more difficult and complicated." A quick decision on the status of the New Year's Day outdoor Winter Classic and the All-Star game later in January isn't expected, Daly said.

Last week, the NHL offered a 50-50 split of hockey-related revenues, which exceeded \$3 billion last season, but that proposal was rejected by the union. The players responded with three counteroffers, all of which would ultimately get the sides to a 50-50 deal, but the league rejected them. Efforts by the players' association to resume negotiations this week were rebuffed by the NHL because the union declined to agree to start bargaining off the framework of the league's offer or issue another proposal using the league's proposal as a starting point. □

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HTC seeks to reverse sliding smartphone sales

ANNIE HUANG
Associated Press

TAIPEI, Taiwan (AP) — Taiwan's HTC Corp. enjoyed three golden years as the first company to make smartphones based on Google's Android software. Now, it is struggling to halt a slide in sales and keep its status as a global brand in a market increasingly divided between Apple Inc. and Samsung Electronics Co.

An early maker of smartphones sold under brands like HP and Compaq, HTC started stamping its own brand on phones in 2006. Taiwanese company surged into the fast lane two years later with its Android smartphones that appealed to consumers because of competitive prices on the free operating system and their strong design.

But its sales faltered from the second half of 2011, partly because its limited financial resources put it at a strong disadvantage to aggressive marketing drives by Samsung and



In this photo taken Thursday, Oct. 25, 2012, a man walks past an advertising board of Taiwan's smartphone maker HTC Corp. in Taipei, Taiwan.

Associated Press

Apple. And unlike its American competitor, it lacked a distinctive flagship phone that captured the hearts of consumers as a must-have product. Instead it produced many phones, trying to cater to a wide range of consumers.

HTC on Friday reported a 79

percent drop in third quarter profit to 3.9 billion New Taiwan dollars (\$99 million) on revenue of NT\$70 billion. It was HTC's fourth consecutive fall in quarterly profit. Worse may be to come. It predicted revenue will drop to NT\$60 billion in the fourth quarter despite traditional

pre-Christmas buying and its introduction of two new models running on Microsoft's Windows 8 software. "HTC is undergoing a difficult period of trial and error," said Stephen Su, market analyst at Taiwan's IndustrialTechnology Research Institute.

"Its technology is good and its design capability is Taiwan's best," he said. "But like other Taiwanese makers, HTC falls behind in the area of practical application."

Su said HTC's unfamiliarity with Western markets puts it at a disadvantage in developing products for Western consumers — in contrast to Apple, which always seems to be one step ahead of consumer sentiment, not only in the West, but all around the world.

HTC was founded in 1997 as a contract electron-

ics manufacturer. Under its chief executive Peter Chou, the company focused decisively on smartphones in 2006, collaborating with U.S. carriers in marketing efforts.

HTC's performance reached its peak in the April-June period of 2011, when it shipped 12 million phones and its revenue totaled NT\$125 billion.

The company's salvation may lie in pursuing alliances with tablet computer and TV makers so HTC phones can share entertainment and other programs with multiple devices just like iPhones do. The Taiwan maker has not publicly addressed the question of a prospective alliance.

China's vast market could also offer HTC very good growth prospects.

Economic ties and trade between China and Taiwan, which Beijing considers a breakaway province, have blossomed in recent years, providing new avenues of growth for many Taiwanese companies.

"The greater China market may be HTC's opportunity if they can make phones with features desired by the Chinese and possibly extend that experience to design products for Western consumers," said Su.

In China's fast growing smartphone market, HTC is expected to sell 6 million phones this year, ranking 10th, according to Taiwan's Topology Research Institute.

That would put it well behind Samsung's projected 32 million, Apple's 15 million and even Nokia's 11 million, the organization said.

UN aims to pull plug on plethora of power supplies

BERLIN (AP) — The days when every piece of home communications equipment comes with its own special power adapter could be numbered.

The U.N. telecoms agency says it has taken a step toward establishing a universal standard for power adapters used by TV set-top boxes, Internet modems and fixed-line telephones.

The Geneva-based International Telecommunication Union said Thursday a standard adapter would allow manufacturers

to ship new devices without a separate power supply. Consumers could also keep the power supply when throwing out obsolete equipment, cutting the amount of electronic waste worldwide by hundreds of thousands of tons of each year.

ITU says the new standard won't be compulsory.

But the agency says the recent experience of creating a standard for mobile phone power supplies showed most manufacturers supported the idea. □

Goodyear Tire 3Q net income falls 32%

TOM KRISHER

AP Business Writer

DETROIT (AP) — Shares of Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co. fell more than 10 percent on Friday as the company's third-quarter net income and revenue dropped on lower tire sales in Europe. The Akron, Ohio, company's results fell short of Wall Street's expectations as problems in Europe offset cost cuts and profits in North America. Its executives said additional cuts are coming because of economic uncertainty.

Goodyear's numbers highlight a problem that is plaguing many global companies in auto-related businesses. Profits in North America are being offset by falling earnings in Europe as the region's economy continues to unravel on concerns about government debt. The same problem almost certainly will surface when General Motors

Co. and Ford Motor Co. report earnings next week. Goodyear reported net income of \$110 million,

such as restructuring costs and asset write-offs, the company made 53 cents per share. Analysts polled by



Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co. said Friday, Oct. 26, 2012 that its third-quarter net income fell by nearly one-third as lower tire sales in Europe offset cost savings and higher North American profits.

(AP Photo/Rogelio V. Solis)

or 41 cents per share, for the three months ended Sept. 30. That's down from \$161 million, or 60 cents per share, a year earlier. Excluding one-time items

FactSet expected 59 cents per share.

Revenue fell 13 percent to \$5.26 billion as the slowing European economy cut tire sales. Analysts expected

\$5.87 billion.

The company's stock plummeted \$1.28, or 10.4 percent, to \$11.02 in afternoon trading. They are 19 percent above their 52-week low of \$9.24 set in early June. They traded as high as \$15.80 in January. Chairman and CEO Richard J. Kramer said Goodyear still expects \$1.6 billion in segment operating income and positive cash flow in 2013. But he said the company will have to change its methods of getting there, relying more heavily on North America and less on international operations than previously thought. That means more cost cuts, focused on Europe and Latin America, to improve results, Kramer said on a conference call. Goodyear is looking at different scenarios for cost cuts next year, Chief Financial Officer Darren R. Wells said. □

Safety issues slam Monster

NEW YORK (AP) — Shares of Monster Beverage Corp. slid again Friday after U.S. two senators asked federal regulators to fix what they say are loopholes that allow energy drink makers to sell products with additives and high levels of caffeine they say "have not been proven safe."

The letter to the Food and Drug Administration from Sens. Dick Durbin and Richard Blumenthal comes after the agency announced this week that it was investigating reports of five deaths in which the consumption of Monster drinks was cited.

Those claims say that people suffered adverse reactions after consuming Monster Energy Drink, which comes in 24-ounce (680-gram) cans and contains 240 milligrams of caffeine, or seven times the amount of the caffeine in a 12-ounce can of cola.

The FDA noted that the allegations, which date back to 2004, don't necessarily prove that the drinks caused the deaths.

In a letter Friday, Durbin and Blumenthal cited a recent study in Consumer Reports that found several popular energy drinks contained significantly more caffeine than the listed amount, while others didn't disclose the amount of caffeine they had.

The FDA caps the amount of caffeine in soda to 0.02 percent, but there is no such limit for energy drinks.

Durbin and Blumenthal also noted that this is the third time this year they asked the FDA to assess the safety of energy drinks.

Representatives for the FDA and Monster did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

This summer, New York state Attorney General Eric Schneiderman also issued subpoenas to energy drink makers as part of the state's investigation of the industry.

Shares of Monster, based in Corona, California, tumbled 4 percent to \$45.19. □

Weak earnings reports weigh on stocks

JOSHUA FREED

AP Business Writer

Stocks closed mostly lower Friday after investors found little to like in weak corporate earnings reports and news of only tepid growth in the U.S. economy in the third quarter.

The Dow Jones industrial average managed a gain of 3.53 points to close at 13,107.21 after spending much of the day in the red. The Standard & Poor's 500 index fell 1.03 points to 1,411.94 and the Nasdaq composite rose 1.83 points to 2,987.95.

Stocks rose in the morning before a mild midday sell-off, then recovered somewhat in the afternoon.

The morning gains came after the Commerce Department estimated that the U.S. economy expanded at a 2 percent annual rate from July through September. That was better than the previous quarter, and better than analysts expected, but not strong enough to bring down the unemployment rate.

Even economic data that is mixed or positive won't outweigh weak earnings, said Lawrence Creatura, a portfolio manager with



Trader Peter Tuchman works on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange.

(AP Photo/Richard Drew)

Federated Investors. Reports like the one on Friday that measure gross domestic product tend to be backwards-looking, while companies are offering forecasts about the months ahead, he said.

"Company earnings trump

macro data. Because investors own Apple, they don't own GDP," Creatura said. Apple fell \$5.54 to \$604 after saying its profit will decline this holiday season.

Even with Friday's rise, stocks lost ground this week, inflicting a sort of death-by-a-thousand-cuts on the rally that began in September. The Dow was down 236.30 points for the week, or 1.8 percent. The S&P has fallen 21.25 points, or 1.5 percent. Goodyear Tire & Rubber sank 10 percent after a steep dropoff in sales in Europe delivered a blow to its earnings. The stock fell \$1.28 to \$11.02.

The advertising conglomerate Interpublic also turned in results that fell short of analysts' forecasts, and its stock fell 2.5 percent, or 26 cents, to \$10.29.

Amazon rose \$15.32, or 7 percent, to \$238.24 despite a smaller-than-expected quarterly profit and a prediction for smaller-than-expected holiday revenue. Among other companies making big moves, cable TV

provider Comcast jumped \$1.20, or 3.3 percent, to \$37.56 after reporting that its income more than doubled in the latest quarter. Revenue was higher than analysts were expecting, and more customers signed up for premium services like high-definition video recorders.

Varian Medical Systems jumped \$8.83, or 15 percent, to \$66.93, the biggest increase in the S&P 500 index.

The company, which sells medical imaging equipment and radiation-emitting devices for treating tumors, reported a 20 percent rise in income because of higher sales of devices.

On its first day of trading, dairy company White-Wave Foods lost 25 cents to \$16.75, down from its initial public offering price of \$17, after rising as high as \$19.17 earlier.

The yield on the 10-year Treasury note fell to 1.75 percent from 1.82 percent on Thursday. □

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This Oct. 26, 2012 photo shows appliances on display at Orville's Home Appliances store in Amherst, N.Y. The government's snapshot Friday, Oct. 26, 2012, of the U.S. economy's growth will be its last before Americans choose a president in 11 days.

(AP Photo/David Duprey)

Q3: U.S. economic growth improves to 2 percent rate

CHRISTOPHER S. RUGABER

AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. economy grew at a slightly faster 2 percent annual rate from July through September, buoyed by more spending by consumers and the federal government.

Growth accelerated from the 1.3 percent rate in the April-June quarter, the Commerce Department said Friday.

The report is the last snapshot of economic growth before Americans choose a president in 11 days. The pickup in growth could lend weight to President Barack Obama's message that the economy is slowly improving.

Still, growth remains too weak to rapidly boost hiring. And the 1.74 percent annual growth rate for the first nine months of 2012 trails last year's 1.8 percent growth — a point that Republican nominee Mitt Romney has emphasized.

"Growth came in a little higher than we had feared, largely because of the big jump in federal spending," said Paul Ashworth, chief U.S. economist at Capital Economics. "But the economy is still not growing rapidly enough to create sufficient jobs to reduce the unemployment rate."

The economy grew faster last quarter because consumer spending rose at a 2 percent annual rate, up from a 1.5 percent rate in the second quarter. Spending on home-building and renovations increased at an annual rate of more than 14 percent. And federal spending surged, mainly because of the sharpest increase in defense spending in more than three years.

Growth was held back by the first drop in exports in more than three years and flat business investment in equipment and software.

The economy was also slowed by the severe drought last summer in the Midwest. The drought cut agriculture stockpiles and reduced growth by nearly a half-point.

The government's report covers gross domestic product. GDP measures the nation's total output of goods and services — from restaurant meals and haircuts to airplanes, appliances and highways. □

US consumer confidence at highest level in 5 years

MARTIN CRUTSINGER

AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — A survey shows U.S. consumer confidence rose this month to the highest level in five years, an encouraging sign for the still-weak economy. The University of Michigan's final index of October consumer sentiment rose to

82.6 from 78.3 in September. That's the highest since September 2007 — three months before the Great Recession began. Falling gas prices and a slightly better job market lifted consumers' outlook. The unemployment rate fell to 7.8 percent last month, the first time since July 2009

than it has been below 8 percent.

The survey followed a government report that said consumer spending helped boost economic growth in the July-September quarter to a 2 percent annual rate. That's up from a 1.3 percent rate in the April-June quarter. □

Dollar gains on pickup in US growth

NEW YORK (AP) — Data showing that the U.S. economy grew at a faster pace than expected during the third quarter pushed the dollar higher against other major currencies Friday.

The Commerce Department said the economy grew at a 2 percent annual rate from July through September, thanks to higher spending by consumers and the federal government. Economists expected it to grow 1.8 percent.

The euro fell to \$1.2932 in late trading Friday from \$1.2949 late Thursday. The euro is down about 1 percent against the dollar for the week.

The British pound fell to \$1.6099 from \$1.6124.

The dollar rose to 0.9352 Swiss franc from 0.9343 Swiss franc and to 99.88 Canadian cents from 99.40 Canadian cents.

The dollar fell to 79.66 Japanese yen from 80.29 Japanese yen. □

Commodities continue weeklong slide

The Associated Press

Commodities prices ended broadly lower Friday as weakness in corporate earnings reports dimmed the outlook for the U.S. economy. The government reported a slight pickup in U.S. economic growth for the third quarter Friday, to 2 percent from 1.3 percent in the second quarter, but that's still not fast enough to make a dent in the unemployment rate, which currently stands at 7.8 percent. Metals prices ended lower, continuing a weeklong slide. Platinum and palla-

dium fell about 1.5 percent, while gold, silver and copper had smaller declines.

Stocks were weak for most of the day following poor results from Goodyear Tire, Interpublic and other companies.

That weighed on investors' expectations for the economy.

Gold for December delivery fell \$1.10 to settle at \$1,711.90 an ounce. December silver fell 4.20 cents to \$32.036 an ounce and December palladium fell \$9.10 to \$595.40 an ounce. January platinum fell \$22.80

to \$1,546 an ounce.

In energy trading, benchmark oil rose 23 cents to end at \$86.28 per barrel in New York.

Heating oil rose 3.57 cents to end at \$3.0978 per gallon, wholesale gasoline rose 2.27 cents to end at \$2.6991 per gallon and natural gas fell 3.4 cents to end at \$3.40 per 1,000 cubic feet.

Crop futures fell. December wheat fell 9 cents to \$8.6375 a bushel, December corn fell 4.25 cents to \$7.3775 a bushel and November soybeans fell 2.75 cents to \$15.6125 a bushel. □



**"FAVI FUNDACION
CU VISION"**

A Romney son follows in his father's footsteps

SHERYL GAY STOLBERG

ASHLEY PARKER

© 2012 New York Times

CAMBRIDGE, Ohio — When Tagg Romney, the eldest of Mitt and Ann Romney's five sons, was a newly married student at Brigham Young University, he and his wife lived in a tiny basement apartment — the same one where his newlywed parents had lived two decades earlier, when he was an infant.

When Romney went on a Mormon mission, he wound up in France, just as his father had. When he decided to go to business school, he settled on Harvard, same as his dad. When he and his wife, Jennifer, bought a house, they picked one in Belmont, Mass., down the street from his parents.

And when Tagg Romney went into business on his own — with his father's finance chairman as a partner and a hefty \$10 million in seed money from his family — he entered the same field, private equity, that made Mitt Romney a very wealthy man.

In the tight-knit Romney clan, values and life choices are passed from generation to generation the way some families pass down heirloom silver. Yet the younger Romney, 42, insists he is not reliving his father's life.

After raising money and working as a surrogate for his father, he says he has no interest in working in a Romney administration — "I will be running my business from Boston" — and no intention of carrying on the political tradition that began with his grandfather, George. His wife, Jennifer, has little appetite for politics, and even relatives say Tagg is not the most natural politician in the family. (That distinction goes to Josh, the middle son.)

"I don't want to say I'd absolutely never run," Tagg Romney said in an interview during a campaign trip last week in Ohio, "but I'd be really surprised if I



Tagg Romney, the eldest of Mitt and Ann Romney's sons, talks to supporters of his father's campaign in Marietta, Ohio, Oct. 19, 2012. Tagg Romney says he has no interest in working in a Romney administration and no intention of carrying on the political tradition that began with his grandfather.

(Meg Roussos/The New York Times)

did. It's a really horrible process, and honestly I just don't want to go through it and I don't want to put my family through it."

For now, though, he is all in, on the road six days out of seven, selling Mitt Romney, the Republican nominee, to the American public. "It means a lot to him, more than anything else, what people think about his father, do they know he's a man of character and integrity," said one friend, Kirk Jowers. "Tagg will do anything his father needs and anything he thinks will advance or protect his dad."

Here in the small city of Cambridge on Friday, several dozen Romney supporters were gathered in front of the local Republican headquarters, where a sign in the window proclaimed "Coal Country For Romney." The campaign bus pulled up, and Tagg Romney emerged with the local congressional candi-

date in an effort to encourage early voting in this critical swing state.

"He'll make a great president for two reasons," Romney told the crowd, speaking of his father. "The first is, he's really good at what he does, he's smart, he knows how to get things done." And second, Tagg Romney said, is that Mitt Romney is "a really good man."

Like another son of a presidential candidate (think: George W. Bush) the younger Romney occupies a unique niche in Romney-land. After working in 2002 as the campaign manager for Kerry Healey, his father's lieutenant governor pick, and in 2007 and 2008 as a full-time campaign aide for his father, he has the trust of campaign advisers and the power to act as a liaison between them and the Romney family. Only this time, he has used it sparingly — in part because his father's strategists ignored his early advice. □

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Hurricane and a winter storm threatens U.S. East Coast

SETH BORENSTEIN
AP Science Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — An unusual nasty mix of a hurricane and a winter storm that forecasters are now calling "Frankenstorm" is likely to blast most of the U.S. East Coast next week, focusing the worst of its weather mayhem around New York City and New Jersey.

Government forecasters on Thursday upped the odds of a major weather mess, now saying there's a 90 percent chance that the East will get steady gale-force winds, heavy rain, flooding and maybe snow starting Sunday and stretching past Halloween on Wednesday. Meteorologists say it is likely to cause \$1 billion in damage.

The storm is a combination of Hurricane Sandy, now in the Caribbean, an early winter storm in the West, and a blast of arctic air from the North. They are predicted to collide and park over the country's most populous coastal corridor and reach as far inland as Ohio.

The hurricane part of the storm is likely to come ashore somewhere in New Jersey on Tuesday morning, said National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration forecaster Jim Cisco. But

fects, mostly from the hurricane part, he said, and the other parts of the storm will reach inland from North Carolina northward.

Once the hurricane part of the storm hits, "it will get

Franklin, said Thursday. One of the more messy aspects of the expected storm is that it just will not leave. The worst of it should peak early Tuesday, but it will stretch into midweek,

NOAA's northern storm forecast center near Washington. "It's going to be a widespread serious storm." With every hour, meteorologists are getting more confident that this storm is going to be bad and they are able to focus their forecasts more.

The New York area could see around 5 inches of rain during the storm, while there could be snow southwest of where it comes inland, Cisco said.

Both private and federal meteorologists are calling this a storm that will likely go down in the history books.

"We don't have many modern precedents for what the models are suggesting," Cisco said.

It is likely to hit during a full moon when tides are near their highest, increasing coastal flooding potential, NOAA forecasts warn. And with some trees still leafy and the potential for snow, power outages could last to the Nov. 6 Election Day, some meteorologists fear. □



Waves, brought by Hurricane Sandy, crash on a house in the Caribbean Terrace neighborhood in eastern Kingston, Jamaica, Wednesday, Oct. 24, 2012. Hurricane Sandy pounded Jamaica with heavy rain as it headed for landfall near the country's most populous city on a track that would carry it across the Caribbean island to Cuba, and a possible threat to Florida.

Associated Press

this is a storm that will affect a far wider area, so people all along the East have to be wary, Cisco said. Coastal areas from Florida to Maine will feel some ef-

fects, mostly from the hurricane part, he said, and the other parts of the storm will reach inland from North Carolina northward.

forecasters say. Weather may start clearing in the mid-Atlantic Nov. 1 and Nov. 2 in the Northeast, Cisco said.

"It's almost a weeklong, five-day, six-day event," Cisco said Thursday from

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Sarah Jessica Parker among stars honoring fashion

NICOLE EVATT
Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Fashion may have been the focus of the Night of Stars gala in New York, but actress Sarah Jessica Parker was more interested in talking politics. "I think there's an enormous amount at stake, it concerns me," said the "Sex and the City" star of the U.S. presidential election. She said she would be in "great despair" if President Barack Obama lost the vote to Republican Mitt Romney in the Nov. 6 election.

I'm speaking up "for women in this country who rely upon social programs — not because they're lazy, not because they don't want to work hard, not because they feel entitled — but because they need access to basic health care that we all, the privileged few or many of us, sort of take for granted."

Parker was at the downtown soirée to present the Lord & Taylor Fashion Oracle Award to designer L'wren Scott, a celebrity favorite and staple of the red carpet.

Carolina Herrera won Fashion Group International's top honor, the Superstar Award, presented by her



Actress Sarah Jessica Parker attends the 29th Annual "Night Of Stars" presented by The Fashion Group International at Cipriani Wall Street on Thursday Oct. 25, 2012 in New York.

Associated Press

longtime friend and client, Renee Zellweger.

"I'm really lucky. We've collaborated for so many years and she's helped make the experience of being an actress and going to public events just extraordinary. Every event is memorable because of what she brings to it and the gift of these gorgeous gowns to help celebrate the occasions," said Zellweger.

Past recipients of the Superstar award include Donna Karan, Giorgio Armani, Valentino, Karl Lagerfeld and Oscar de la Renta.

Actress Viola Davis present-

ed Nicola Maramotti of Italian fashion house MaxMara with the night's Heritage Award. But the Academy Award nominee said she is by no means a fashionista. "No, not at all," said Davis. "I can answer that immediately. I have a very good stylist. But I have to say I'm getting better with the help of my husband and the stylists, I now feel like you know it's kind of my duty as a woman to just feel beautiful when I walk outside. Not to compete with anyone. To stay in my lane, but to feel like I'm being my cutest self." □



For global distribution Schwarzenegger to star in 'The Legend of Conan'

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Arnold Schwarzenegger is coming back — as Conan the Barbarian. Universal Pictures says California's former governor will star in "The Legend of Conan," an action film being developed for the actor. Deadline Hollywood was the first to report the news Friday.

The 65-year-old Schwarzenegger starred in two previous films about the mythic hero: 1982's "Conan the Barbarian" and 1984's "Conan the Destroyer."

Schwarzenegger told Deadline he loves the character and is "honored" to play him again. □

Katy Perry, Keys to perform at Newman benefit

NEW YORK (AP) — Katy Perry, Quincy Jones, Alicia Keys and Vince Gill are performing at an event to benefit the late Paul Newman's The Painted Turtle Camp.

The Dec. 4 gathering in Los Angeles is being billed as "You've Got a Friend: A Celebration of Carole King and Her Music." King will perform alongside John Legend, Amy Grant, Herb Alpert and Lani Hall. Newman's The Painted Turtle is a camp in The Serious-Fun Children's Network, which the actor founded to assist children with serious illnesses and their families. □



This Oct. 13, 2012 photo released by Starpix shows Katy Perry at Comedy Central's Night Of Too Many Stars: America Comes Together For Autism Programs at The Beacon Theatre in New York.

Associated Press

FAVI

"FAVI FUNDACION
CU VISION"

Vast Broadway costume collection on display in Fla.

KELLI KENNEDY

Associated Press

POMPANO BEACH, Florida

(AP) — Box by box they arrived, the once glittering costumes of Broadway legends and theatre memorabilia, now dirty, tattered and forgotten. There were painstakingly hand-beaded bodices and garments worn by Julie Andrews, Carol Burnett and Vanessa Williams, each more unkempt than the next, stored on rusty hangars and covered in black soot. It was to be one of the largest collections of Broadway costumes in America. There were more than 500 boxes in all, newly purchased by Marilynn Wick to add to her multimillion dollar collection of costumes at Costume World which she rents to professional theatres and high school productions.

Wick and her daughter Kimberly surveyed the treasures they had just purchased at a 2005 auction: a Judy Garland hat, probably from her TV show; Ginger Roger's red sequin dress from "Hello Dolly;" Lou Diamond Phillip's exquisite jewel encrusted jacket costume from his



This Oct. 3, 2012 photo shows Kimberly Wick displaying the costume book and one of the dresses from the play, "Dracula the Musical", as she conducts a tour of her costume museum in Pompano Beach, Fla.

Associated Press

Tony-winning role in the "The King and I;" and Nathan Lane's gangster suit from "Guys and Dolls."

They knew they had to share it. "We were going through boxes and I said, 'Kim, are we really going to rent Judy Garland's hat?'" said 69-year-old Marilynn Wick.

The mother-daughter duo opened a museum in 2011,



This Oct. 3, 2012 photo shows Marilyn Wick as she discusses her Pompano Beach, Fla. costume museum.

Associated Press

showcasing more than one million costumes from nearly 50 shows, guiding daily tours through a non-descript South Florida warehouse against a backdrop of hand painted sets and a marquee replica from storied Broadway theatres like the Winter Garden.

It took seamstresses months to restore the garments. One spent six months on Julie Andrew's ivory and gold beaded dress from "My Fair Lady."

Kimberly Wick, a seamstress with a flair for the dramatics, narrates the tour, wearing a flowing, peach gown from the musical "Titanic," charming the crowd with behind the scenes tidbits along the way.

There's the time Pearl Bailey was too tired for her multiple costume changes (several are on display) in "Hello Dolly" and asked

the audience if she could perform in the same dress throughout the show. Eighteen thousand trim balls were hand sewn onto the silk costumes from the cast of "Once Upon a Mattress," including Sarah Jessica Parker's dress. (The Wicks no longer rent out costumes from that show because the delicate silk is now threadbare.) They even have the dress Parker wore in her role opposite husband Matthew Broderick in "How To Succeed in Business Without Really Trying."

The Wicks' own Julie Andrew's dress from the Broadway show of "My Fair Lady." They tried to buy the iconic black-and-white striped dress Audrey Hepburn wore in the film at an auction several years ago, estimating it would cost about \$100,000. But it sold for more than \$3 million.

Timberlake apologizes for 'silly, unsavory video'

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Justin Timberlake is apologizing for a "silly, unsavory video" that shows homeless people offering congratulatory wishes to the pop star and his new bride, Jessica Biel. Timberlake posted an open letter on his website Friday saying he didn't know about the video or contribute to it.

He says the video "was made as a joke on me" and wasn't shown at his wedding in Italy last week. Timberlake calls the video "distasteful" and says he's deeply sorry to anyone offended by it. But he acknowledges that it was made by well-meaning friends.

The 19-second video is titled, "Greetings from your Hollywood friends who just couldn't make it." It shows three people who obviously don't know the famous couple greeting them with wedding wishes. □



This June 2, 2012 file photo shows actor-singer Justin Timberlake accepting the troops' choice for entertainer of the year award at the 2012 Guys Choice Awards in Culver City, Calif.

Associated Press

Kimberly Wick says, "My Fair Lady" is their most valuable collection: they even own the dress patterns.

All the costumes are displayed under the gleaming light from the original chandelier from Tavern on the Green restaurant, of course.

"We were bidding against Donald Trump. He got six. We got one," Kimberly Wick said.

After the tour, the audience dons white gloves and paws through racks of costumes from "Pippin" to "The Producers."

The Wicks stumbled into the costume business accidentally. Kimberly Wick, then 12, and her sister were bored one muggy South Florida summer day in the 1980s so their housekeeper helped them sew a Santa costume. They stitched a few more, put an ad in the paper and were met with a steady stream of customers wanting to rent a suit for \$25 a pop.

Their mother saw a business opportunity and opened up a storefront in South Florida where she made \$250,000 the first Halloween. In 1990, she made a deal to provide all the clown costumes to the legendary Ringling Brothers and Barnum and Bailey Circus. The single mother said she fell in love with the theater decades ago when she saw her first Broadway play at age 7. Little by little, she purchased costumes and Broadway trinkets from auctions. She now runs four costume stores around the country, a division that rents costumes to theaters and the museum.

"I figured out a way to make Broadway part of my everyday life," she said.

Once the Wicks obtain a show's wardrobe, they look at the historic value of the show and decide whether to restore it to display or whether it's more valuable to rent.

It costs up to \$145 to rent a Broadway costume, but nearly half their business comes from much cheaper high school rentals — they handle about 50 productions a year. □

What Moderation Means



DAVID BROOKS
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Over the past month, Mitt Romney has aggressively appealed to moderate voters. President Barack Obama, for some reason, hasn't. But, in what he thought was an off-the-record interview with The Des Moines Register, Obama laid out a pretty moderate agenda for his second term.

It occurred to me that this might be a good time to describe what being a moderate means. First, let me describe what moderation is not. It is not just finding the midpoint between two opposing poles and opportunistically planting yourself there. Only people who know nothing about moderation think it means that.

Moderates start with a political vision, but they get it from history books, not philosophy books. That is, a moderate isn't ultimately committed to an abstract idea. Instead, she has a deep reverence for the way people live in her country and the animating principle behind that way of life. In America, moderates revere the fact that we are a nation of immigrants dedicated to the American dream — committed to the idea that each person should be able to work hard and rise.

This animating principle doesn't mean that all Americans think alike. It means that we have a tradition of conflict. Over the centuries, we have engaged in a series of long arguments around how to promote the American dream — arguments that pit equality against achievement, centralization against decentralization, order and community against liberty and individualism.

The moderate doesn't try to solve those arguments. There are no ultimate solutions. The moderate tries to preserve the tradition of conflict, keeping the opposing sides balanced. She understands that most public issues involve trade-offs. In most great arguments, there are two partially true points of view, which sit in tension. The moderate tries to maintain a rough proportion between them, to keep her country along its historic trajectory.

Americans have prospered over the centuries because we've kept a rough balance between things like individual opportunity and social cohesion, local rights and federal power. At any moment, new historical circumstances, like industrialization or globalization, might upset the balance. But the political system gradually finds a new equilibrium. □

The moderate creates her policy agenda by looking to her specific circumstances and seeing which things are being driven out of proportion at the current moment. This idea — that you base your agenda on your specific situation — may seem obvious, but immoderate people often know what their solutions are before they define the problems.

For a certain sort of conservative, tax cuts and smaller government are always the answer, no matter what the situation. For a certain sort of liberal, tax increases for the rich and more government programs are always the answer.

The moderate does not believe that there are policies that are permanently right. Situations matter most. Tax cuts might be right one decade but wrong the next. Tighter regulations might be right one decade, but if sclerosis sets in then deregulation might be in order.

Today, we face our own set of imbalances. Inequality is clearly out of whack. The information age, family breakdown and globalization have widened income gaps. Government spending and government debt are also out of whack. The aging population and runaway health care costs have pushed budgets to the breaking point. There's also been a hardening of the economic arteries, slowing growth. The moderate sees three big needs that are in tension with one another: inequality, debt and low growth. She's probably going to have a pretty eclectic mix of policies: some policies from the Democratic column to reduce inequality, some policies from the Republican column to reduce debt.

Just as the founding fathers tried a mixed form of government, moderates like pluralistic agendas, mixing and matching from columns A, B and C. They try to create harmonious blends of policies that don't, at first glance, go together.

Being moderate does not mean being tepid. It will likely take some pretty energetic policies to reduce inequality or control debt. The best moderates can smash partisan categories and be hard-charging in two directions simultaneously.

Moderation is also a distinct ethical disposition. Just as the moderate suspects imbalance in the country, so she suspects it in herself. There are many moderates in this country, but they have done a terrible job of organizing themselves, building institutions or even organizing around common causes. There are some good history books that describe political moderation, like "A Virtue for Courageous Minds" by Aurelian Craiu, a political scientist at Indiana University. But there are few good manifestoes.

Therefore, there's a lot of ignorance about what it means to be moderate. If politicians are going to try to pander to the moderate mindset, they should do it right. I hope this column has helped. □



Mitt Romney's Economic Model: EU Tested?

the European Central Bank as

saying: "The idea that austerity measures could trigger stagnation is incorrect."

Rep. Steve King, R-Iowa, praised Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany for preaching austerity and said: "It ought to hit home to our president of the United States. It ought to hit all of us here in this country."

"The president should learn a lesson from the 'German Miracle,'" Rep. Joe Wilson, R-S.C., urged on the House floor in July 2011. Also in 2011, Sen. Jeff Sessions of Alabama, the top Republican on the Senate Budget Committee, denounced Obama's economic management and said: "We need a budget with a bold vision — like those unveiled in Britain and New Jersey."

OK. Let's see how that's working out.

New Jersey isn't overseas, but since Sessions and many other Republicans have hailed it as a shining model of austerity, let's start there. New Jersey ranked 47th in economic growth last year. When Gov. Chris Christie took office in 2010 and began to impose austerity measures, New Jersey ranked 35th in its unemployment rate; now it ranks 48th. Sen. Sessions, do we really aspire for the same in America as a whole?

Something similar has happened internationally. The International Monetary Fund this month downgraded its estimates for global economic growth, with only one major bright spot in the West. That would be the United States, expected to grow a bit more than 2 percent this year and next.

In contrast, Europe's economy is expected to shrink this year and have negligible growth next year. The IMF projects that Germany will grow less than 1 percent this year and next, while Britain's economy is contracting this year.

Karl Rove, that sounds a lot like stagnation to me.

All this is exactly what economic textbooks predicted. Since Keynes, it's been understood

that, in a downturn, governments should go into deficit to stimulate demand; that's how we got out of the Great Depression. And recent European data and IMF analyses underscore that austerity in the middle of a downturn not only doesn't help but leads to even higher ratios of debt to economic output.

So, yes, Republicans have a legitimate point about the long-term need to curb deficits and entitlement growth. But, no, it isn't reasonable for Republicans to advocate austerity in the middle of a downturn. On that, they're empirically wrong.

If there were still doubt about this, we've had a lovely natural experiment in the past few years, as the Republicans in previous years were happy to point out. All industrialized countries experienced similar slowdowns, and the United States under Obama chose a massive stimulus while Germany and Britain chose Republican-endorsed austerity. Neither approach worked brilliantly. Obama's initial economic stimulus created at least 1.4 million jobs, according to the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office. But that wasn't enough, and it was partly negated by austerity in state and local governments.

Still, America's economy is now the fastest growing among major countries in the West, and Britain's is shrinking. Which would you prefer?

I'm not suggesting Obama distribute bumper stickers saying: "It Could Be Worse." He might want to stick with: "Osama's Dead and GM Is Alive."

Yes, there are differences between Europe and America. But Republicans were right to call attention to this empirical experiment.

The results are in. And, as Rep. King suggested, the lessons "ought to hit all of us here in this country."

Contact Kristof at Facebook.com/Kristof, Twitter.com/NickKristof or by mail at The New York Times, 620 Eighth Ave., New York, NY 10018. □



NICHOLAS D. KRISTOF
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Mitt Romney's best argument on the campaign trail has been simple: Under President Barack Obama, the U.S. economy has remained excruciatingly weak, far underperforming the White House's own projections.

That's a fair criticism.

But Obama's best response could be this: If you want to see how Romney's economic policies would work out, take a look at Europe. And weep.

In the past few years, Germany and Britain, in particular, have implemented precisely the policies that Romney favors, and they have been richly praised by Republicans here as a result.

Yet these days those economies seem, to use a German technical term, kaput. Is Europe a fair comparison? Well, Republicans seem to think so, because they came up with it. In the past few years, they've repeatedly cited Republican-style austerity in places like Germany and Britain as a model for America.

Let's dial back the time machine and listen up:

"Europe is already setting an example for the U.S.," Rep. Kenny Marchant, R-Texas, said in 2010. (You know things are bad when a Texas Republican is calling for Americans to study at the feet of those socialist Europeans.)

The same year, Karl Rove praised European austerity as a model for America and approvingly quoted the leader of

Muslim pilgrims stone devil in symbolic hajj rite

AYA BATRAWY

Associated Press

MINA, Saudi Arabia (AP) —

Millions of pilgrims in Saudi Arabia on Friday furiously cast pebbles in a symbolic stoning of the devil, carrying out a final rite of hajj, as Muslims around the world celebrated the start of Islam's biggest holiday, the Feast of Sacrifice.

After stoning three walls symbolizing Satan in a rejection of sin and temptation, male pilgrims changed out of the seamless terry-cloth robes of pilgrimage and shaved their heads, as a sign of renewal. Women — and those men who prefer not to undergo a complete shave — had a lock of hair clipped.

Though pilgrims will repeat the stoning ritual for at least two more days, they could now call themselves "hajjis," referring to those who have done the pilgrimage. Malik Evangelatos, from Ukiah, Calif., said the experience felt "wonderful, satisfying and humbling."

Evangelatos, who converted to Islam six years ago, said the simple pilgrim's garment that he had worn the past few days helped him "see the bigger picture in life and go back changed, happy and appreciative." For him, the hajj brought a chance to be truly equal regardless of ethnicity or race.

"It has probably been the highlight of my life outside of getting married and having a baby," he said. "You feel an emotional release. It is something that is not recreated anywhere else in the world."

For the stoning ritual, the 3.4 million pilgrims from around the world filed in crowds through a multi-level structure housing the walls symbolizing the devil in the desert valley of Mina, outside the holy city of Mecca.

The structure of ramps maintains traffic flow, moving pilgrims on four levels past the walls, as they throw seven pebbles at each. Some have criticized the nearly kilometer-long (0.6 mile) cement structure,

which resembles a mega parking garage with escalators, saying it detracts from the simplicity and spiritual aspect of hajj. But the facility protects lives, Hajj Ministry Director General Amin Fatani, told The Associated Press. The

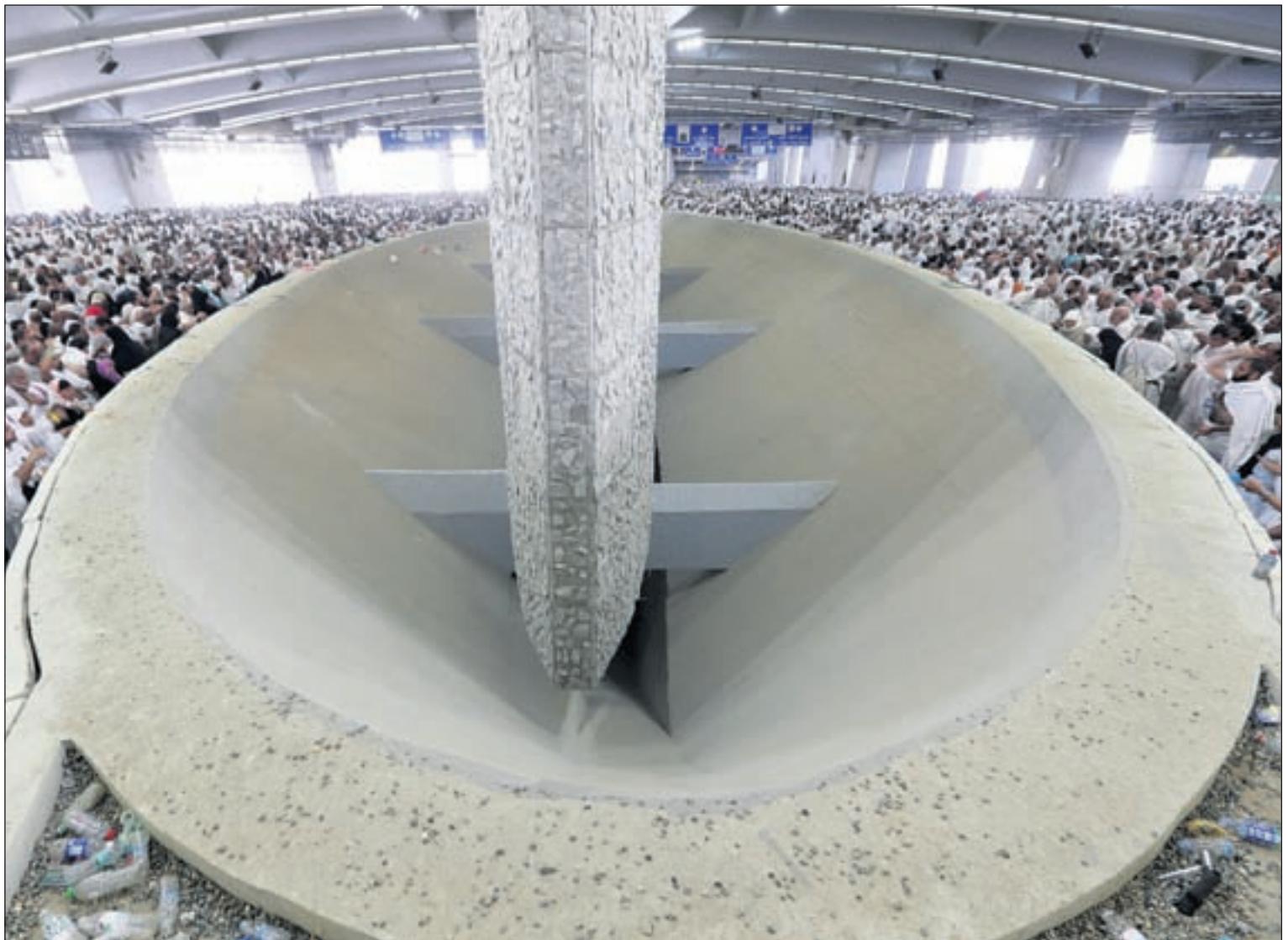
a catastrophe from the first day."

On Friday, Muslims marked the holiday, known in Arabic as Eid al-Adha, commemorating what Muslims believe was Prophet Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son Ismail — the

day of contemplation and prayers to wipe away past sins. Then overnight, they went to the nearby plain of Muzdalifah to collect the pebbles they would use in the stoning ritual before heading to Mina by the morning.

from poorer Muslim nations, it is common to sleep in the streets and walk the trajectory among the sites, a distance of around 30 kilometers (19 miles). Many have children or elderly relatives with them.

"I envy them," Ahmed



Muslim pilgrims cast stones at a pillar, symbolizing the stoning of Satan, in a ritual called "Jamarat," a rite of the annual hajj, the Islamic faith's most holy pilgrimage, in Mina near the Saudi holy city of Mecca, Saudi Arabia, Friday, Oct. 26, 2012. The five-day rituals of Hajj began on October 24 when millions arrived in the holy city of Mecca and continues for another two days.

(AP Photo/Hassan Ammar)

stoning ritual has been the scene of deadly crushes and stampedes killing hundreds — the most recent in 2006 — as pilgrims tried to squeeze past and throw their stones, especially since there used to be pillars instead of walls, meaning the massive throngs had to focus on a smaller point. Even with the walls, pilgrims on one side often get hit by pebbles thrown by people on the other side.

"The life of a hajji is precious to the government and their safety comes first," Fatani said. "If we leave hajj the way we had it been before, there will be

Biblical Ishmael, though Christians and Jews believe his other son Isaac was the near-sacrifice — as a test of his faith from God.

Around the world, Muslims slaughtered lambs, sheep and other livestock in remembrance, giving the meat to the poor. At Mina, pilgrims purchased tokens to have a sheep slaughtered at nearby slaughterhouses.

The day of stoning marked an exhausting trek for pilgrims between the string of ritual sites strung across the desert outside Mecca. They spent the day Thursday at Mount Arafat in a

Between the movements, many also went back into Mecca to again circumambulate the Kaaba, the cube-shaped structure toward which Muslims pray every day — Islam's holiest site. Tunisian pharmacist Ahlam Zahar said she teared up seeing the sheer number of people praying in unison as she approached the Kaaba late Thursday before coming to Mina for the stoning on Friday.

"Hajj needs energy and concentration," she said. "It's really hard under the heat."

For most pilgrims coming

Fahmy said of those enduring the difficult trek. "These people are following the footsteps of the Prophet (Muhammad). They could manage to get rides, but they exhaust themselves for the bigger reward with Allah." Fahmy, the general manager of the Cairo-based Islamic Huda TV, said this was his 11th Hajj to complete. Despite feeling tired afterward, the reward of the pilgrimage is in the hardship one faces, he said. "You feel obedient to Allah," Fahmy said. "I feel like it's something that is entirely for the pleasure of Allah." □